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PARLIAMENTARY REMINISCENCES
AND REFLECTIONS

1868 TO 1885

PARLIAMENTARY
REMINISCENCES AND
REFLECTIONS

1868 TO 1885

BY THE RT. HON. LORD GEORGE HAMILTON
G.C.S.I., LL.D., D.C.L.

LONDON
JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET, W.

1917

First Edition . . . December 1916
Reprinted . . . January 1917

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PREFACE

I BEGAN to write these Reminiscences as a distraction from the ever-present anxieties of the War. I had no intention whatever of formulating any charges against any party or section of political opinion, though I wrote as a Tory and Free-trader. But the mere narrative of the events of the seventeen years embraced by these reflections forms a continuous and accumulating indictment of the Pacifist or Manchester School of politicians. During this period their action throughout, as is shown by indisputable facts, has been harmful to the body politic. They have promoted the very evils they tried to extirpate, and they have at the same time drifted into an attitude of antagonism to the cultivation of patriotism and the self-sacrificing qualities associated with that virtue. For ten years out of the seventeen between 1868 and 1885, Gladstone was in office, trying hard to base his policy abroad on their theories—with what results these pages show. After this War we must rehabilitate our resources and reorganise our country as best we

can, and in this reorganisation it is to be hoped that we shall permanently discard the fallacies of a school which in the past has done us such irrevocable damage.

G. H.

17 MONTAGU STREET,
PORTMAN SQUARE, W.,
April 1916.

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exponent of blatant Radicalism. The seat had in the past been notoriously Radical, and only once in the last century had Middlesex been represented by a Conservative.

I treated the matter as a practical joke and replied to the invitation in that tone. I then received a visit from Colonel Taylor, the well-known Tory Whip, who told me that the offer was a serious one and that Disraeli wished me to fight the seat.

The question before the constituencies was the disendowment and the disestablishment of the Irish Church, and as my father was Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland at the time, and had taken a strong part in opposing this policy, I was told that I was sure to get a big Protestant vote, there being in Middlesex a strong Low Church element. Accordingly, I went by appointment to see Disraeli. He was sympathetic and encouraging. He talked to me on various questions, and I felt all the time that he was trying to find out whether I had any wits or ideas. He then asked me how old I was. I answered: "Twenty-two." "Really! you look about eighteen," he said in reply. He then patted me on the cheek and said: "All right, little David; go in and kill Goliath."

In the meantime, Labouchere heard that I was a possible candidate and had recourse to his usual tactics by showering abuse upon my father, my family, and myself. This so annoyed my father that he at once put down the sum necessary to cover the cost of the election. The big county elections in those days were ridiculously expensive. The cost of my first three elections

in the aggregate amounted to £30,000. Every voter polled cost about £1 a head. All kinds of abuses prevailed ; a vast number of solicitors was engaged at high fees as district agents ; all the flies, buses, and carriages available were hired on the pretext of conveying voters to the poll, and travelling expenses from all parts of the kingdom were allowed. Sir Henry James' " Corrupt Practices Act " in 1883 put an end to this orgy of expenditure.

The financial arrangements being made, I was then interviewed by my Committee, who were appalled at my boyish appearance. They strongly urged that a second candidate of decent age and venerable appearance should be associated with me. I agreed, provided that he halved the expenditure. This condition choked off all aspirants, except one of seventy-eight years of age. The contrast between us was so comical that my Committee gave way, and I stood alone.

In the meantime, I had been preparing for the fray. I had read a good deal of history and many political biographies, so that I knew pretty well the past history, both constitutional and actual, of Great Britain. As regards current politics, I set to work regularly, giving up so many hours a day and obtaining from old Members of Parliament—notably the late Lord Mayo—the ins-and-outs of questions most attracting public interest. After two or three weeks of this cramming, I felt I could pass quite a decent examination in the catch political topics of the moment.

I then turned my hand to the composition of speeches. I found I could without much

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difficulty write out passable stuff, but then the question arose—could I deliver it to a noisy or indifferent audience? I had never in my life spoken to a public audience, except once after dinner. I was advertised for nineteen meetings, and I was uncertain as to how I could get through such a novel ordeal. My bear-leaders, in order to test me, took me to a big meeting at St. James's Hall held on behalf of Mr. W. H. Smith's candidature for Westminster. It was a very noisy meeting. Mr. Robert Grimston, the speaker who preceded me,—a splendid specimen of the old fighting Tory,—had a violent personal altercation with Mr. Bradlaugh, which very nearly ended in a physical fight. I was received by derisive cheers, but I found out that I was free from stage-fright and that noise and interruption rather quickened than upset my wits when speaking.

So I embarked on my stumping campaign with a certain amount of self-confidence, and I was very lucky in having as an opponent Labouchere. He had no idea of fighting except by recourse to personalities. His career had up to that date been somewhat chequered, and in the year preceding the election he had had a personal encounter with a foreign Baron at Homburg in which he came off second best. Of me he knew nothing. His antecedents were a good target for me to fire at. After a few days' interchange of personalities he left me alone and proceeded to insult and quarrel with his colleague, Lord Enfield.

I was tough and capable of attending and speaking at several public meetings a day, and the fun and humour of a good riotous meeting was

then to me very enjoyable. In those days the candidate was generally allowed by his opponents to speak, though subject to constant interruption and questions, and physical encounters between partisans at the meetings themselves were not uncommon. But opposition, organised so as to prevent a man from speaking or being heard, was not common. This is the product of the caucus system which was not then in existence. On one occasion a very fat Radical orator denounced me as “ a bloated aristocrat fattening upon the flesh and blood of the people.” I was very slight and dressed in a tight-fitting frock-coat. In those days the candidate for Parliamentary honours always addressed his constituents *en grande tenue*. I got up and put myself alongside my bulky opponent, and the roars of laughter which greeted this personal application of his diatribe completely upset him.

On another occasion I had a most amusing encounter with Mr. Bradlaugh at Tottenham. Bradlaugh lived there and was a considerable power amongst the extremists. He had been heavily beaten in a Parliamentary contest at Northampton a day or two before our meeting. This defeat did not improve his temper or that of his followers. As soon as I had spoken, he came from the far end of the hall, where his followers were concentrated, close up to the platform, and he began in a loud voice and hectoring manner to put to me the catch Radical catechism. Suddenly a man, as much bigger than Bradlaugh as Bradlaugh was than myself, got up with a huge club and said : “ Give me the signal, my lord, and I will crack

this infernal scoundrel's skull." A perfect pandemonium ensued. Bradlaugh's people tried to come to their hero's rescue, my people keeping them back. Bradlaugh and the big man both remained immovable, but Bradlaugh was furtively watching out of the corner of his eye the big club over his head, and the holder of it was watching intently for me to give the signal for an onslaught. The tension was broken by a big Irish parson who was Rector of Tottenham, and who previously had had many an encounter with Bradlaugh. He jumped up and began to exorcise Bradlaugh both with tongue and fists as if he were a devil. I was afraid that he would strike Bradlaugh, so I got hold of one end of the very long tails of the orthodox parson's frock-coat. One of my uncles seized the end of the other tail, and the result of our combined efforts was that the coat split up right to the neck, leaving us each with a coat-tail in our hands.

The scene now became so ludicrous that the different disputants resumed their seats, and I and my agents got out of the hall as best we could to go to another meeting. My friend with the club then forcibly took the chair and declared a vote of confidence to be carried in my favour.

In the anteroom to the hall was a troupe of French singers who had engaged the hall for a concert after our meeting was over. They were terrified, hiding their heads under cushions and stopping up their ears, for they firmly believed that a red and murderous revolution was about to take place. We had some difficulty in reassuring them.

Subsequently I came frequently in contact with Bradlaugh and his would-be assailant. The former was a perfectly straight and truthful man with whom it was possible to have reliable agreements. His early atheistical writings were abominable, and I am sure that in his mature years he was heartily ashamed of them. He had an ethical creed of his own, purely secular, but to which he religiously adhered. The big man who wished to assail him was a very decent fellow, Josiah Pascoe by name. He was a giant in physique and strength, and a religious fanatic, but otherwise a popular and kindly man. The night before our meeting he had been personally assaulted by a number of Bradlaugh's followers and hurt, so he came to my meeting armed with a stick, which made him, in his own words, "a match for the whole pack of them."

I obtained unexpected support in many quarters. My Committee worked with exceptional energy and skill, and—to the amazement of the outside public—I was returned at the head of the poll by a majority of over 1400, the figures being as follows :

Hamilton	..	..	..	8078
Enfield	..	..	..	6624
Labouchere	..	..	..	6502

In the days of open voting hourly returns were made, and the conduct of the election was not infrequently regulated by such information. As soon as it was known that I was sure to be returned, my supporters, who deeply resented Labouchere's antics and general conduct, split

their votes between me and Enfield, who otherwise would have been beaten.

In 1868 appearance on the hustings was still a part of the ordeal through which candidates had to pass. Brentford was the place where the Middlesex hustings were erected. It was a very rowdy place, and on the day of nomination there was a large number of bargees' wives below the hustings with long poles, to which were attached small bottles filled with white liquid. As soon as I began to speak, they all advanced with "Milk for the Baby"; and they further went through a number of gesticulations showing how, if they got hold of me, they would put me across their knee and chastise me in the way in which they were accustomed to treat their children. On my second appearance at the hustings I was the elected candidate, and a great change was noticeable in their demeanour, for these ladies were again there, and as soon as I came down from the hustings there was a shout: "We will now kiss the Baby," and I had to beat a rapid retreat to my Committee-room to avoid this punishment.

The hustings, with all their noise and tumult, gave one an insight into life and presented a good deal of the comical side of human nature. But as the candidates always had to pay for the erection of these hustings, and top price was always charged them, their abolition was a considerable reduction in the expenditure which previously had to be incurred.

Labouchere's behaviour throughout this contest was very silly. He annoyed various

interests, and he insulted many people by gratuitously offensive remarks. As the day of reckoning approached, and he had to appear upon the hustings, he became apprehensive that he would be physically assaulted—by whom and for what we never were able to ascertain. So obsessed was he with this alarm that, to our delight and the chagrin of his supporters, he appeared, upon the declaration of the poll, so muffled up in comforters and a slouch hat as to be scarcely recognisable, and he was further escorted by a gang of hired roughs from the east end of London. This was the climax. One of his supporters was heard to say : “ I don’t know who is going to hurt that little man, but if he’s afeared why don’t he employ honest Brentford folk ? ”

Amongst my agents in this election was one, Wollaston Pym by name, who in after years became a very staunch friend of mine, and who was, in addition, an admirable political agent. He was a handsome, strong man, who had spent a good many years in our Colonies, and he had all the quickness and resource of one habituated to the difficulties attending life in wild and sparsely populated regions. He was lineally descended from the great Parliamentarian of Charles I.’s time, and he was heir to the family property in Bedfordshire. He showed such aptitude in this election that he became the prominent political agent for the Conservative Party in the whole of Middlesex. The appointment was a novelty, as up to that date solicitors had had the monopoly of such work. They were not, generally speaking, a success. They gave only secondary thoughts

to their political duties ; they were far too stationary in their offices, and very expensive. Pym founded a school of political agents, and amongst those who were there trained was Captain Middleton, afterwards the well-known and very successful general manager of the Conservative Party. Pym showed what could be done by daily attention to the ins-and-outs of life in a big constituency. He was ubiquitous, a born fighter either with tongue or fists, and a thorough gentleman. He was trusted and liked by all, and he gave the whole-hearted service which can come from conviction alone.

Our example was followed by many other constituencies, and thus arose the modern class of whole-time political agents whose work has been so invaluable to our party, being far less costly and much more efficient than the work of the class whom they superseded. Pym never lost an election, and when Middlesex was cut up in 1885 into eight divisions we won every seat by very large majorities. Statesmen may formulate grandiloquent policies on the platform, but efficient machinery to drive home the ideas of that policy into the apathetic masses is as essential to success as the conception of the policy itself.

I thus found myself at the age of twenty-two, mainly by luck and a chapter of chances, Member of Parliament for a constituency, not only important from its population, but one which included all the freeholders of the Metropolitan Boroughs north of the Thames. All these boroughs, with the exception of one seat in

Westminster, were represented by Radicals. These freeholders in course of time came to look upon me as their representative and, instead of going to their Borough Members, came to me to promote their grievances and listen to their wants. I thus gained, from the accident of representing such a constituency, a pretty wide knowledge of the views, ideas, aspirations, and prejudices of the well-to-do middle class.

My electoral success was due to the strange chance of my being selected for a constituency which, unknown to the wirepullers, had during the past ten years been converted from Radicalism to Conservatism. Rapid extension of suburban railroads and the outpouring of professional men, tradesmen, and clerical employees into the rural outskirts of London had steadily changed the tone and politics of the constituency. I was merely the mouthpiece of this transformation, but I got the whole credit of the victory.

A Parliamentary candidate during his election is necessarily a person of importance in the area which he is contesting. If successful, he is for some time afterwards surrounded by a halo of glory, and is very apt during that period to get above himself. I must plead guilty to this exaltation, but I soon had a lesson which cured me from unduly inflating myself.

Shortly after this election, Disraeli asked some few of the most prominent victorious candidates to dinner. We were about ten in number, each and all believing his victory to be the one feature of the election. We all began and continued to talk at once, and each of us was shocked to

find that silence from others did not at once ensue. Each looked at the other in surprise, as much as to say : " Who are you, that you should question my right to talk and to be listened to ? " Conversationally, the dinner was not a success, but I went home that night conscious that among the vanities of this life there is none which evaporates more quickly than the ephemeral distinction of a candidate who has been successful in a bygone election.

CHAPTER II

First speech in Commons and impression of its Members—
House of Lords—Magee's great speech—Dominance of
Cobdenite theories in Commons—Delane: Secret of his
power—Lord Burnham—Match Tax—Ayrton.

BUT my luck did not end with this election. I was even more fortunate with my first Parliamentary speech. The Irish Church Bill was the big measure of the session, and it created extraordinary interest, not only from the great political changes it indicated, but as constituting the first political round between Disraeli as ex-Prime Minister and Gladstone as Prime Minister. I was told by Disraeli to be ready to speak on the second reading, so I very carefully prepared a speech.

I found out early in my work upon the platform that I had the knack or trick—not uncommon amongst public speakers—of being able to commit a speech to memory without putting a word of it upon paper. The process is simple and quite rapid. You sit in a chair and get a clear, consecutive line of thought, mentally clothe it in words not spoken, and repeat the process a few times. It is not the highest method of preparing a speech, but it has this advantage in debate, that it enables you to concentrate your attention upon what your opponent is saying,

and to fit your reply to his argument into the speech you have already got fixed in your mind. It is more an effort of memory than anything else ; but I quite lost this aptitude a few years later after a tiresome attack of insomnia.

Having composed a speech in this fashion, I asked Dr. Alexander, the late Primate of Ireland and a born orator, whom I knew very intimately, to let me recite it before him. He was very kind and helpful, brushed up some of my points, and suggested some ideas of his own.

Thus prepared and fortified, I sat through five nights of debate, getting up whenever a speech was finished, but waiting in vain for my name to be called. During all this time I was polishing up my speech by storing up replies to weak arguments of opponents. On the last night of the debate, just before ten o'clock, the House being packed to hear the big guns on each side sum up, I was called through someone on the Speaker's list not putting in an appearance. The House of Commons is always considerate to a new Member, and especially to a young Member, and I looked very young. I had then a clear, carrying voice, and I delivered, *ore rotundo*, my carefully prepared speech, into which I inserted as I went along replies to preceding speakers' arguments. To my amazement the speech was a huge success. Disraeli, who was in front of me, warmly shook me by the hand, and Gladstone, in summing up the debate, not only went out of his way to pay me a compliment, but devoted part of his speech to answering my attack.

The next morning I awoke, not famous, but in the category of "promising young men."

It was this combination of extraordinary good luck that gave me a long start over many of my political associates, who would have done just as well if they had had the same chance. My father and I received so many congratulations upon this speech that it was decided that I should give up the Army as a profession and devote myself entirely to politics. Having thus become a full-time politician, I worked hard for the remainder of the session at blue books and Parliamentary papers, and intervened occasionally in debate.

The reputation of the House of Commons then stood, both individually and collectively, on a very different pedestal from that which it now occupies. In society it was assumed and not disputed that there was much ability, integrity, and public spirit within its doors, and on both sides of the House. An influential Member of Parliament was then, not only in his own circle, but in the world at large, a person of real importance. My attitude towards them at first was one of deference and submission, but I found little by little that reputations in the House of Commons are not unfrequently based upon fluency of speech, posing, and superficiality. Of course, there are a good many exceptions to this indictment, and frequently a Minister or a private Member has to pass through an ordeal which is a real test of ability, thoroughness, and staying power. But very early in my Parliamentary life I discovered, when I had carefully got up a case

and investigated it thoroughly, how superficial was the knowledge of the Minister in reply, and how empty and thin were the speeches of many of those who spoke. A dexterous use of the tongue, the introduction of the political shibboleths of the moment, and a power of stringing words together that meant little or nothing were the stock-in-trade of a large proportion of Members and even of Ministers. No man owes more to the House of Commons than I do, and it seems ungracious to belittle a benefactor; but I have often thought what my future career would have been if I had remained in the Army. I am confident that I should never have attained to anything like the prominence that I got in political life and office. Yet no one can pretend that the qualities a soldier should possess or the ordeals through which a soldier has to pass before he can obtain real eminence are not a truer test of character, reliability, and courage than those associated with political distinction. I therefore arrived early in life at the conclusion, now fortified by many years' experience, that fluency and dexterity of speech rank far too high in the public life of England. They are very useful adjuncts to a man of courage, principle, and high ideals, but nothing more, and useless and dangerous when dissociated from such attributes.

The House of Lords at this time had within its numbers many first-rate speakers, and the Bench of Bishops contained a number of men of exceptionally high attainments. Tait, Wilberforce, Thirlwall, Trench, Alexander, and Magee represented, each of them, high though different

intellectual gifts and powers ; but unquestionably the orator of this galaxy of talent was Magee. He was Dean of the Chapel Royal, Dublin, in 1866-1868, when my father was Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland. He astonished us by his first sermon, and we assumed it was an exceptional effort to welcome the advent of a new Viceroy ; but Sunday after Sunday there were produced without effort, and almost as a matter of certainty, discourses equally eloquent, equally close in their reasoning, equally illustrated by flashes of wit and satire. With the exception of Gladstone, I never met anyone who so impressed one with natural facility and promptitude of speech as Magee. He was, however, much more concentrated, and stuck more closely to his argument than the other orator. His sermons were, in every sense, orations, spoken not read—elocution, voice, and gesture all equally good. He spoke from the scantiest of notes—as a rule, they were contained on a half-sheet of notepaper. There was Scottish as well as Irish blood in his veins, and his logical power and strict adherence to a close sequence of thought were quite as remarkable as the torrent of eloquence and illustration which he poured forth in the development of his argument. In this sense he much resembled Bright who, in contrasting his own speaking with that of Gladstone, said : “ I am like a voyager on the sea going direct from coast-point to coast-point. Gladstone, however, stops to investigate every river to its source which happens to run into the sea he is traversing.” Towards the close of 1868 Magee was made Bishop of Peter-

borough by Disraeli—an elevation entirely obtained by merit, as he had up to that time been a consistent Liberal.

The second reading of the Irish Church Bill in the House of Lords was the most sustained exhibition of debating power I ever heard, and Magee's oration was universally admitted to be the gem of the whole debate. Magee was a small, insignificant-looking man until he began to speak. Then all was forgotten except that a born orator was before you. I arrived in the House of Lords after he had been speaking about ten minutes. It was an extraordinary sight. The House was packed from the floor to the highest of the galleries, and in the midst of this magnificent Chamber and this huge audience there was a plain pigmy of a man speaking at a table. But so completely had he already dominated his audience with his tongue that a large proportion of them was unconsciously listening to him with open mouths, expressive of wonder and delight. The speech was a triumph of oratory, and the vibrant earnestness of its delivery carried his convictions home to his audience.

The close of his speech was the most daring and powerful peroration that I ever heard, and it must have been impromptu. It was made in reply to the preceding speaker, who suggested that the Lords should be careful how they conducted themselves, as they would some day be called to account before the bar of public opinion. Magee took up this piece of advice and twisted it into a satirical litany: "What shall we say to indignant democracy when we are thus put on our

trial? Spare us, good people, that we may sit on red benches and in a gilded chamber! Spare us, good people, that we may continue to play at being legislators! Oh! spare us, good people, because we have never failed to spare ourselves!" Then, with the deftness and power of an inspired orator, he drew in a few graphic phrases a picture of the Last Day of Judgment and of the tribunal before which we shall all have to appear, and he ended by saying: "When I think of the ordeal of that Great Day, I dare not, I cannot, I would not, vote for this most unhappy and ill-omened Bill."

As he sat down, the staid decorum of the House of Lords vanished, and the House became a pandemonium of enthusiasm, for nearly the whole of the gallery rose up and cheered over and over again, whilst the applause in the House itself was so continuous that Lord Ripon, who followed him, had to wait some minutes before he could be heard.

Two veteran orators of the highest repute, Lords Derby and Ellenborough, were sitting side by side and exchanged the following remarks: "Did you ever hear anything equal to that?" "No, unless it was Plunket, and he was not half so good."

Magee had been very considerate to me in Dublin, so when I met him by accident a few days later I ventured to congratulate him upon his splendid performance. He then told me that he practically delivered the whole of his speech without a note. He had lost his notes at the beginning of his speech owing to a remark of Lord

Russell. In his opening sentences Magee fell foul of certain Radical Peers who in their turn interrupted him. Lord Russell, who was very deaf and, like most deaf people, spoke much louder than he intended, said in his clear staccato voice to his neighbour : " Who is the Bishop who has put his foot in it ? " This perturbed Magee, who was about to quote an extract from some well-known authority. When he had finished his quotation and shut up the book, his notes had disappeared, and he could not find them for the remainder of his speech. When he sat down, of course they tumbled out of the book on to his lap.

Magee was the most delightful of companions and the most amusing of conversationalists. Many are the stories told of his happy repartee, of which I give one apt illustration.

He was for a short time rector of Inniskillen, Fermanagh. He was naturally a very tolerant and broad-minded man. The church of which he was rector was the headquarters of the Orangemen upon certain festivals. Orange flags were brought into the church, and the service became an Orange ritual. Magee did not like this procedure, and he refused on one occasion to preach. There was a fluent firebrand of a clergyman beneficed in the neighbourhood, and he wrote to Magee asking if he might preach in his place. Magee had found out that this divine had allowed his mother to become a recipient of Poor Relief in the south of Ireland. He replied to this request in the affirmative, provided that he might choose the text. The other agreed to this condition, and the text given him was : " And

from that hour that disciple took [his mother] unto his own home." The sermon was not preached.

All who saw Magee or heard him at work, whether speaking, organising, examining, or cross-examining, were struck with his extraordinary forensic and legal aptitude. If he had become a member of the Bar, he must have risen to the top of his profession and realised a large fortune. He did attain a great eminence in his calling, for he became Archbishop of York, but died a few months subsequently. His estate was valued at his death at less than £2000. The holier calling is certainly not the more profitable.

The House of Commons, of which I was a Member, had been elected on a reformed qualification, namely, household suffrage in boroughs and a higher qualification in counties. Though a very large proportion of working men were thus enfranchised, they had then no adequate organisation or machinery by which they could return their own class to Parliament. The cost of elections was so extravagant that it effectively shut out the vast majority of them from competing with richer men. There were then only two parties—Conservative and Liberal—though the latter was a somewhat motley crew, composed of Whigs, Radicals, and Irish Roman Catholics. In combination they constituted a large majority. The dominant tone and atmosphere of this House of Commons was essentially middle class and commercial. Their tenets were those of the Manchester School, of which Gladstone and Bright were eloquent exponents. Of foreign or colonial

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politics, national or imperial aspirations, they knew little and cared less. Abroad cosmopolitan amity promoted by the interchange of trade was to bind the whole world together in lasting friendship and peace. At home the abolition of every institution and custom that made individuals prominent or powerful was advocated to ensure a dead level of uniform equality. Economy, peace, and reform were the alpha and omega of their creed. All national expenditure had to be pared and cut down to the barest necessities. The Army and Navy expenditure was arbitrarily reduced by millions, and those who effected these reductions were apparently utterly indifferent to the fact that these reductions invalidated the effective and fighting efficiency of the whole Army and Navy, and consequently endangered the very existence of the country. In debate it was sufficient for any Minister to get up and say that the proposal made was contrary to the first principles of political economy for it to be summarily rejected. Political economy then meant the extreme undiluted doctrines of Cobden and the Manchester School. Supply and demand were the only forces which could regulate or expand civilisation, and—no matter how hardly they might affect certain classes and interests—their operation was to be left untouched and uncontrolled. To interfere with them was blasphemy.

There was an excellent old gentleman, Mr. Potter, Member of Parliament for Rochdale, and known as "Bright's Trumpeter." He was Secretary to the Cobden Club, and his delight

was to scatter broadcast all over the world the pamphlets and literature of that Club. They were in his eyes the panacea for all evils, political, national, racial, and religious. The Church of Rome having enunciated a very high doctrine as to the infallibility of the Pope, that august personage received a large consignment of Cobden's works to inculcate into him the folly of such a pretension.

It was under these influences that Government employ in the lower grades of unskilled labour got a bad name. As Prime Ministers usually, and up to quite a recent date almost invariably, held the post of First Lord of the Treasury, that Department, instead of being a financial department ranking equally with the other great departments of State, was considered by those in it to be the Government. The influence and power of Gladstone at that office had deeply imbued the whole of the permanent officials at the Treasury with the Cobdenite doctrines. Their decisions on all questions of expenditure, small and great, were final and irrevocable, and for many years that office exercised its exceptional position in cutting down without knowledge or responsibility the expenditure of every department save its own. I can remember when the Treasury applied for tenders for the performance of certain classes of work. The expenditure being mainly the payment of labour, they issued a schedule of prices as a guide to those tendering, and they accepted a tender twenty-six per cent. below their own schedule. This was too much even for the House of Commons, and the debate which ensued

destroyed for ever the further Treasury employment of sweated labour.

Disraeli, speaking in 1872 at a great meeting at Glasgow, said: "The aspirations of a great people cannot be satisfied by the mere rattle of the dry bones of political economy," and in the coming election this sentence obtained a widespread and effective response.

During this period I not unfrequently met Mr. Delane, the celebrated editor of the *Times*. He was still in the plenitude of his power. His position in politics and society was so exceptional as to deserve more than a passing notice. He was a remarkable personality, and his idiosyncrasy just fitted into the epoch in which he was born and moved. As an editor he showed great acumen, courage, and indefatigable industry. In addition to the discharge of his editorial work, he made it part of his business to frequent smart society; but, unlike other professional men, he never dropped his business when out socially. On the contrary, he was always on the prowl to pick up information, which he utilised no matter how or from whom he got it. That this betrayal of social convention did not exclude him from the society he so exploited was a proof of his audacity and power. He did not shine as a wit or brilliant conversationalist, though he spoke tersely and pertinently. His attitude was that of the infallible oracle, the sole depository of accurate information or of sure forecast. To put it plainly, he gave himself intolerable airs, but this was largely due to the fact that he was terribly toadied by a certain section of society

and particularly by the leading Whig ladies of that period. He was fond of snubbing all who ventured to differ from him, particularly if they were young men.

The extreme power which the *Times* then wielded, though largely due to the ability of Delane as an editor, was assisted by a number of contributing circumstances which, as they changed, prevented any subsequent editor, no matter what his ability might be, from putting the *Times* in the same position which it occupied during Delane's editorship. In prestige and wealth the *Times* then towered above all other newspapers, and therefore it could with ease command the services of the pick of journalistic ability. Delane made his selections with great judgment and discrimination, especially as regards his foreign correspondence. He further so organised the transmission of news from abroad as to give the *Times* priority of information upon foreign questions over all Press competitors. He also obtained much the same advantage in home affairs, for he contrived with great adroitness always to have a tame Cabinet Minister in his pocket—a most reprehensible practice. I defy any Cabinet Minister to correspond daily with the editor of a great paper and at the same time remain loyal to his colleagues. Consciously or unconsciously, the oath of secrecy and the sense of obligation to his brother Ministers become little by little sapped until they disappear. Delane's *Life and Memoirs* are full of incidents where distinguished men, quite regardless of the honourable understanding between colleagues

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sharing collective responsibility, improperly supplied him with the most confidential information which was used. I can perfectly appreciate Lord Russell's sentiment in a letter which he wrote to a friend when he became Prime Minister in 1865, namely:

"I am aware that Mr. Delane is very angry that I did not ask to kiss his hand instead of the Queen's, when I was appointed to succeed Palmerston, but I would rather be out of office than hold it upon such humiliating conditions."

Between the Reform Bills of 1832 and 1868 politics were centred in London, and were confined to a comparatively small circle. The fight was then mainly between Whigs and Tories, the Radical Party being an appendage to the Whigs, though from time to time they gave them a good deal of trouble. Parties were more evenly balanced than at present, and for many years the balance was held by the Peelites. It was, therefore, possible for Delane with the *Times* behind him to annoy and even upset Governments dependent upon wavering majorities. To utilise this Cabinet-destroying power fully, it was necessary for Delane to be independent of all party ties and leading principles. This Delane appreciated, and he moulded his conduct accordingly. No one quite knew what he would do next, or what use he would make of any unforeseen eventuality. It was in the Whig houses that he was generally to be found. In those days there was still a number of Whigs who really believed that they had a hereditary right to permanent office. Here was a man who could either protect

or upset this their vested interest. Therefore, said they, let us do everything we can socially to keep him in good temper. Delane knew this, and traded upon it ; but it required consummate assurance effectively to play this rôle for the time which he succeeded in doing.

The first time I met him was at a small dinner-party at Spencer House in the middle of the general election of 1868. I had just issued my address as a candidate for Middlesex. Delane was then on the warpath against Disraeli. He sat next but one to me at dinner. His conversation was a diatribe against Disraeli and the conduct and management of the Conservative Party. He was particularly severe upon the absurdity of putting up ignorant young aristocrats for populous constituencies, and he more than once alluded to the Middlesex constituency. This aroused my ire, and I interrupted him by the trite remark that as regards Middlesex he did not know what he was talking about. An animated but not discourteous dialogue ensued. I stuck to my guns ; I told Delane that I should get in, and I expressed surprise as to the sources from which he derived such erroneous information. After dinner my delightful hostess chided me for my presumption, saying : " I really was afraid you would have had a row with Mr. Delane." I in the innocence of my heart replied : " Why not ? "

I went home that evening pleased but somewhat uneasy. I had successfully bluffed the redoubtable editor of the *Times*, but my contention was pure bluff. Could I turn it into reality ? By the chapter of lucky coincidences already

described, I did so succeed, and the sequel was amusing.

A few weeks after I had taken my seat in the House I went into the outer lobby, where I encountered Delane. He greeted me warmly, seized me by the arm, and made me stroll back arm in arm with him into the inner lobby of the House. I shall never forget the look of surprise upon the faces of my associates when they saw me, the youngest Member in the House, coming into the lobby on such terms of equality with the great despot of politics. I am sure that this notice of me was kindly meant, but I was much abashed by the patronage thus publicly displayed towards me.

Delane's entrance into the lobby was a sight worth witnessing. No pope or autocrat could have shown a more lofty condescension to his subordinates than he exhibited to the habitués of the lobby, and what annoyed me was not so much his assumption of superiority, but the groveling sycophancy with which it was accepted.

But these days are gone, never to return. With the reduction of the franchise, the increased circulation of cheaper newspapers, especially in the provinces, political influence was no longer concentrated in London, but was disseminated over the country, each great centre of population being a miniature London in its dissemination of political information and influence. The general election of 1880 was the first indication of the wane of the power of the *Times*. The *Times* and the whole of the London Press, with a few exceptions, were in favour of Disraeli's

policy, yet the policy they so supported met with a crushing defeat in the country. I think I am correct in saying that in every preceding election for many years past the *Times'* influence had always been associated with the winning side.

Whatever Delane's faults might be—and he wore most of them upon his sleeve—he was a strong, big man and a patriot to the core of his heart. Palmerston and he had much in common. Both were very good specimens of the typical John Bull of the period—capable, fearless men, with a hatred of cant, hypocrisy, and humbug, and ready at all times to fight for what they believed to be right. We should all have felt happier during the troublous period of 1914, 1915, and 1916 if we had had a few more men of this stamp in our public life of to-day.

Delane made one uniform mistake throughout his editorship. He would write on foreign politics and of foreign Governments in the same domineering tone which he adopted upon home politics. His intimacy with the Governments of the day gave abroad to these hectoring utterances the authority and initiative of the British Government itself. There was no country that he was fonder of lecturing, with the exception of the United States, than North Germany, and I am sure that one of the causes which have tended to the present intense animosity of Germans against England is to be found in the tone, temper, and language of the *Times'* leading articles upon foreign affairs whilst Delane was Editor of that newspaper. His example was followed in this respect by some of his successors.

There was another remarkable pressman who constantly frequented the inner lobby at this time—Mr. Levy Lawson, afterwards Lord Burnham. His methods and demeanour were very different from those of Delane, but as a pressman I am not sure that he was not the bigger man of the two if we judge him from where he started and to what he attained. He was in no sense obtrusive or ostentatious, but a most close and receptive observer ; and he had an absolute genius for picking up the class of information and the writers who appealed to the social strata just below Delane's clientèle. As Editor and owner he was engaged in the very difficult task of building up and exploiting a newspaper with little or no reputation behind it, and his work was not only extraordinarily successful, but it has stood the test of time. The more critical sections of society might laugh at the flamboyant descriptive style of the correspondents of the *Daily Telegraph*, of whom the most celebrated was a Mr. Whitehead, located in Paris, and who from that capital gave, racy accounts of every class of rapid society under the Empire. Or they might depreciate the high-flown periods of the facile pen of Sir Edwin Arnold ; but both were read and liked. Lawson was very independent ; he never allowed his personal likes or dislikes to influence the conduct of his paper. In his earlier career he was an enthusiastic supporter of Gladstone ; but when that statesman in critical times took what Lawson believed to be an unpatriotic attitude, the *Daily Telegraph* became his most formidable and pertinacious opponent. I can recollect no national

crisis in the last forty years in which this journal did not advocate with consistent ability a patriotic policy of self-sacrifice and self-reliance. The paper thus became a centre of patriotic attraction. Its circulation and influence grew, and its profits correspondingly increased. It was the work of Lord Burnham's long life to lay well and truly the foundations of this great journalistic enterprise; and what it was when he first became its Editor and what it was when he died are the measure of his rare aptitude and prescience as a pressman.

The Government of which Gladstone was the head had no less than seven Cabinet Ministers who had taken a first-class in Classics, namely, Lord Hatherley, Lord Halifax, Lord Kimberley, Gladstone, Mr. Cardwell, Mr. Lowe, and Mr. Chichester Fortescue; but they did not pull well together. Lowe's sarcastic tongue and biting wit were not much appreciated by those of his colleagues from whom he differed. The first ugly knock the Cabinet got was over a proposal of Lowe to put a tax of a penny per hundred upon matches. Bryant & May and other similar establishments gave their young ladies a day's holiday to protest by petitioning Parliament. They promptly took possession of Parliament Street and the approaches to the House of Commons, and so tenacious and violent were they that the police could not dislodge them at the time Members were coming to the House. They were waiting for Lowe. He, however, cleverly avoided them by walking across to St. James's Park Station, and from there he got to the House

of Commons by the tunnels between Westminster Bridge Station and the House.

The tax was so unpopular that it had to be withdrawn. The Cabinet, being classical, had assented to the proposal to tax matches because it was associated with a very clever Latin pun by Lowe. On the stamp put upon matches was imprinted: "*Ex luce lucellum*," *i.e.*, "A little gain from light—or Lucy." They were greatly disappointed when they found that vote-catching was a more powerful influence in the House of Commons than appreciation of classical jokes.

Just outside the Cabinet, but equal in ability to many in it, was a curious specimen of humanity, by name Ayrton, the First Commissioner of Works. He had some Eastern blood in him, and his manner and speech in public were the essence of sardonic impertinence. In private life he was not a bad fellow and very amusing, but he did not suffer scientists gladly, and in his official capacity he came into collision with that cult, especially Sir Joseph Hooker, the great botanist who was in charge of Kew Gardens. Ayrton insisted upon treating him as if he were a weekly hireling. Though an able administrator, his caustic tongue was always getting him into trouble; but his political extinction was due to a comical inadvertence on the part of his friends. He was Member of Parliament for the Tower Hamlets, then an immense constituency. A big meeting of his constituents was advertised at which he as a protector of the public purse was to make a great speech in reply to the allegations that were constantly made against him. Unfortunately for him,

the conveners of the meeting forgot to advertise a chairman, and this gave his opponents their chance. As soon as Ayrton appeared on the platform a man got up and moved that Mr. Nosotti, a real fighting publican, should take the chair. This was seconded and put to the meeting, who thought it was part of the arrangements, and voted accordingly. Before Ayrton and his friends recovered from their surprise, Nosotti was in the chair and proposing from that eminence in a voice of thunder the following resolution :

“ That this meeting much regrets that Mr. Ayrton has by his coarse and insolent demeanour made the representation of the Tower Hamlets a byword.”

An indescribable scene of confusion ensued, lasting for more than an hour, degenerating at times into a free fight. But Nosotti stuck to his chair, though it was carried half round the room by his opponents. Finally, Ayrton and his friends retired and left a free field to their assailants.

In those days a big open public meeting was assumed to be an accurate representation of the feelings of the locality, and the ridicule caused and damage done to Ayrton's reputation by these disorderly proceedings largely contributed to his subsequent defeat at the next election of 1874 by Charles Ritchie, who afterwards became Chancellor of the Exchequer.

London—and especially frequenters of the Park—are greatly indebted to Ayrton, for in spite of Radical protests he passed into law the Parks

Regulation Act, by which public meetings were brought under the control and cognisance of the police. His chief opponent in the debates upon this Bill was Sir William Harcourt, no mean performer in a personal altercation; but in the slanging matches between these two Harcourt invariably found more than his match.

Ayrton made himself very pleasant to me, and on several occasions I got him to make improvements and concessions as to admission into Kew Gardens which delighted my constituents. We first met at the Brentford hustings.

CHAPTER III

Reduction of Navy and Army Estimates—Franco-German War
—Goschen at Admiralty—Rare debating power—Marriage.

THE Estimates for the Army and Navy were largely reduced in 1870, being the lowest presented to Parliament for some years. Lord Granville, who upon the death of Lord Clarendon succeeded him as Foreign Minister, gave a most confident and optimistic forecast upon the prospects and general preservation of peace. Within a few weeks of this unhappy prediction, war broke out between France and Germany, and the result of that war was that the map of Europe was largely changed for the benefit of Germany. British sympathies were greatly in favour of Germany. There was a distrust of Napoleon III., and Bismarck, with his habitual skill, had got documents in his portfolio which, when published, suggested doubts as to the French intentions in respect of the neutrality of Belgium ; but there were a good many men in Parliament, including myself, to whom a perusal of the papers published by the German Government suggested doubts as to who was the real aggressor and originator of this war. The telegram published by the German Government, and which was known to be the cause of the war, seemed to have no foundation or facts behind it sufficient to justify a hostile collision between

France and Germany. It was afterwards admitted by Bismarck himself that he so altered the original telegram as to give it a meaning which its first phraseology did not bear. It was the first public indication of the methods of the Prussian Foreign Office of which we have since had such cumulative evidence. It is now openly stated by German publicists and professors that the gravest responsibility rests upon those who attempt to prevent war when the conditions are favourable to Germany ; or, in other words, it is the duty of German statesmen, regardless of treaty or obligation, to make war on any nation whom it thinks it can despoil. It is such an astonishing reversal of our accepted national policy that war should, if possible, be avoided, that we can hardly accept this dogma except as emanating from criminals or lunatics ; but, unfortunately, experience has now taught us that war is the great national industry of Prussia.

In the next session the Naval and Military Estimates were raised by three millions, and towards the close of the year Mr. Childers, whose fussiness at the Admiralty had reduced both that Office and the Navy to a general condition of chaos, was replaced by Goschen. Though he was a strong Free-trader and a most capable financier, he had nothing in common with the ideals of the Little Englander. In his Life there are to be found two remarkable letters written by him when he was quite a young man. The first was a reply to Cobden, who in a paternal but peremptory manner told him that his speeches—particularly as regards landlords and land—

were not acceptable to the Cobdenite school and must be modified. Goschen, a born fighter, made such a reply that Cobden subsided and made no further attempt to rope in so capable a controversialist.

The other letter was a reply to Gladstone, who shortly after Goschen's appointment to the Admiralty wrote to him to say that he was expected to reduce naval expenditure largely. Goschen flatly but courteously declined to do anything of the kind, unless naval conditions justified such a course. Looking back now at our recent experience, it seems incredible that there should ever have prevailed in our public life a policy by which the requirements of the Navy were regarded as being of so secondary a character that ships and forts were built and kept without guns, and guns were put on board ships without ammunition; yet for many years of my Parliamentary life these views not only were current but dominated our naval and military establishments.

I have spoken of Goschen as a born fighter; but when I came to know him well—as I did when he was my colleague—I became greatly attached to him. He had a fine and chivalrous character; he was the truest of friends, though an unfailing critic: reliability, knowledge, and courage were shown in every phase of his life and career. He obtained a high reputation as a debater and speaker, yet he had great physical difficulties to overcome: his voice was raucous, his gestures ungainly, and he was so blind that not only could he not see his audience, but

found difficulty in reading his notes. Yet the intellectual grip he always had of his subject, his extraordinary aptitude and quickness in analysing to its very roots a new argument or contention, his wide knowledge and his fearlessness, and a terse and at times an epigrammatic diction, made him a most effective speaker in party warfare.

The most remarkable instance of quick debating instinct which I can recollect occurred in a discussion in Committee on the Parnell Commission Bill in 1888. Goschen was the hero of the incident: he was then Chancellor of the Exchequer. The Parnell Commission Bill was bitterly fought through all its stages, and for some reason great animus was shown by the Radical Party against one of the three Commissioners, Mr. Justice Day. He was a Roman Catholic judge of the highest character, standing, and legal ability. A motion was made to omit his name from the Commission. Just before the debate began, Morley came over to W. H. Smith and showed him a letter which he had received from a barrister in Dublin. This barrister had been a colleague of Mr. Justice Day on a Commission appointed to inquire into riots in Belfast, and he was also attached to the *Freeman's Journal* staff. The letter was a very strong condemnation of Mr. Justice Day, likening him to Torquemada, and denying that he had a judicial temperament or was in any way qualified for the task which it was proposed he should undertake.

When Morley rose to speak in the debate, he quoted the most violent extracts from this letter. Our friends were much annoyed and surprised at

his action, for Morley, though a keen opponent, was a punctilious fighter. Strong comments were made upon the impropriety of using a private letter to damage the reputation of a judge. Gladstone rose in defence of Morley, and in the specious and earnest manner which he could always assume he informed the House that he had only seen the letter a few minutes before the debate began, that the matter to which it referred was urgent, and in the opinion both of himself and of Morley was of such a nature as necessitated the contents of the letter being brought to the notice of the Government at the earliest possible moment. Goschen got up, and in his clumsy but effective way pinned Gladstone to this statement. He then said: "We have had the substance of the letter; but I should like the date." An awkward pause ensued: then the date was given. The letter was some days old.

The nature of the transaction was now apparent to everybody. Morley had brought the letter down in his pocket to the House. He had shown it to Gladstone, who induced him to make use of it; and then, forgetting the date on which the letter was written, put forward the plea of urgency as justification for this breach of tradition. The debate subsided, and we had a satisfactory division, Goschen being much congratulated by his friends upon the quickness and thoroughness with which he successfully countered a slim Parliamentary manœuvre.

Towards the close of this year (1871) I married.

As I was only a younger son in a family of thirteen and my wife also was one of thirteen, our aggregate income was small if tested by the wants of the present day. Some of my family and friends thought that I had embarrassed my political future by this union.

I have been lucky in many phases of life, but this was my luckiest venture, for I can truly say that if I attained a political eminence subsequently far beyond my most sanguine early expectations, one of the certain causes of that rise was the sound judgment of my wife and her power of making friends by her unfailing intelligence, amiability, and unselfishness.

CHAPTER IV

Ireland—Chichester Fortescue—Serjeant Dowse—Incident in Disraeli's great speech—Education Bill—So-called religious difficulty—Late hours in Commons.

DURING the greater part of this Parliament, notwithstanding the so-called remedial Irish legislation, there was much crime and disturbance in portions of that island. Chichester Fortescue was Irish Secretary. Neither as an administrator nor a speaker did he much impress the world: he had a slow, drawling delivery which was very tiresome and ineffective. He once began the introduction of a Coercion Bill in the following terms and with the following pauses: "Sir, I rise . . . for the purpose . . . of introducing a Bill which has . . . for its purpose . . . the protection of life and . . . above all of property. [General titter.] But when I . . . say that I . . . mean this." Disraeli, who did not like him, said in an audible voice to his neighbour: "A not unfavourable specimen of his rhetoric."

Associated with Chichester Fortescue in the government of Ireland was Serjeant Dowse as Solicitor-General. He had a wonderful flow of ready if somewhat coarse humour. Mr. Bernal Osborne posed as the wit of the House, and he was very fond of attacking the Government, when he made the freest use of a very bitter

tongue. One night on an Irish Land Bill he denounced the Government for excluding from its operations leaseholders whose leases had seventy years to run. "What," he said, "is a lease of that period? It is only a seventy years' notice to quit." Dowse was put up to answer him, which he did with great success, and he finally floored him by saying: "My right hon. friend says that a seventy years' lease is nothing but a notice to quit. If that be his view, I wonder, considering the warning given him by the Psalmist, that my right hon. friend ever had the courage to emerge from his mother's womb."

On another occasion he was put up to answer a legal colleague, the future Lord Coleridge, who in a very pompous and high-flown speech advocated woman suffrage. Amongst other things, he said that some judges were really old women. Dowse flagellated him mercilessly, and ended up by saying: "Because my right hon. friend has the bad taste to think that certain judges are old women, he maintains that every old woman should be a judge." It was rumoured that Coleridge subsequently requested Dowse to have no personal communication with him except in writing.

Chichester Fortescue was a very good-looking man of a certain type. Dowse was a very ugly man with a huge head and a short beard. Someone said to Disraeli: "They say Dowse is like Socrates." Dizzy replied: "Dowse is as like Socrates as Chichester Fortescue is to Alcibiades."

Chichester Fortescue shortly afterwards became a peer, and Lord Hartington succeeded

him in Ireland. He had in that capacity to bring in a second Coercion Bill, chiefly dealing with the state of the county of West Meath, and he made an extraordinary proposal to set up a secret Parliamentary Committee to take evidence. Disraeli got up as soon as Lord Hartington finished, and he delivered a twenty minutes' speech of the most scathing invective and ridicule I ever heard. The House was worked up to a pitch of great excitement by this performance, for the speech was full of telling epigrams, namely: "You have legalised confiscation . . . you have condoned high treason . . . you have emptied the gaols of Ireland . . . you cannot govern a single county in that country . . . you are making Government ridiculous."

In the most effective part of his speech, Disraeli suddenly put up his right hand, in which was his handkerchief, to his mouth, and turning round to his neighbour, Lord John Manners, apparently asked him a question which he could not hear. "What, what are you saying?" Disraeli then said *sotte voce*: "It is all right," and he took up his speech at the exact word where he had left off, and finished it amidst uproarious applause from the whole Tory benches. The young men behind the Front Opposition Bench could not make out the purpose of this bit of by-play. Dining in the City two days afterwards, I sat next Alderman Lawrence, a well-known Radical Member of Parliament, who sat exactly opposite Disraeli in the House of Commons. He said to me: "Your Chief is a wonderful fellow." I replied: "I am glad you think so."

He in return said : " Would you like to know what happened the other night when he turned to John Manners ? " " Very much," said I. " Well," he added, " in the best part of his speech and in the middle of a sentence his teeth fell out, and he caught them up with extraordinary rapidity in his right hand, turned round apparently to ask a question of his neighbour, put them in, and resumed his speech at the exact word where he had left it off."

The legislation of 1872 and 1873 can have little interest at this lapse of time for the present generation ; but these sessions were politically noticeable for the growing unpopularity of the Government and the widening cracks in the solidarity of the Radical Party. The Education Bill passed this session gave offence to the extreme Nonconformists. It is now more than forty years since the first thorough national scheme of education was established, and it is a melancholy reflection that from that time to now the overwhelming preponderance of discussion and legislation upon education has been connected with so-called religious difficulty. If only a fraction of the energy, perseverance, and time which have been wasted over a difficulty which only exists on the platform and in the House of Commons had been given to the secular reorganisation and improvement of elementary education, we should now have had a thoroughly efficient and progressive system. The sad feature of this prolonged wrangle is that, so far as teachers, parents, and children are concerned, the religious difficulty does not exist. A few intemperate clergy of the

Church of England may from time to time have said or done illiberal things in connection with Nonconformity, but it is the extreme section of the latter body who are mainly to blame for the prolongation of this futile strife. There can be little doubt that the more extreme Disestablishment men thought that they could utilise National Education to the detriment of the Church or, at any rate, to deprive it of the educational advantages which the erection and possession of so many schools gave it.

There are well-known and prominent Nonconformist divines in London who have recently adopted an attitude of passive resistance by refusing to pay the Educational Rate. The plea on which they base their refusal is the pretext that they cannot allow dogma not accepted by their denominations to be taught in National schools ; yet these same divines have for many years, without a word of protest, allowed Jewish schools to be set up out of the rates, staffed by Jewish teachers who daily teach a religious syllabus approved by the Jewish Rabbi. The conclusion is irresistibly forced upon one that their objections are political rather than Christian, social rather than religious ; but the impossible attitude of political Nonconformists has given us the most expensive and least efficient system of elementary education of any big nation in Europe.

The House of Commons sat daily during this period for intolerably long hours. Not only was there no closure, but opposed business could be taken at any hour of the night or morning. Gladstone apparently was made of iron, and he

remorselessly used his powers of endurance in compelling the House of Commons to sit until any hour in the morning, provided that by so doing he could advance the legislation of his Government. Opponents of Bills or movers of amendments to clauses in Bills had to sit up night after night until the cold hours of the morning, or they risked losing their opportunity. Towards the close of one session I had an important amendment to move on a Government Bill that might come on at any hour. For two nights whilst watching over this amendment, the Bill to which it related not being reached, I got to bed at 4.30 a.m. The third night I was more lucky : my amendment was discussed, and I got to bed at five o'clock. Such a strain was unendurable to the older men. The second reading of a big Sanitary Scheme was moved by the President of the Local Government Board at 2.30 a.m.

This misuse of power (for it was literally slave-driving) was entirely due to Gladstone, and it led to retaliations. Obstruction, or talking against time, was started by that well-known Parliamentary character, James Lowther, and a small group of his friends as a legitimate defence against perpetual sittings and wholesale legislation. Gladstone once said to Lord Enfield, in reply to a query from him as to whether or not this practice, if extended, would not upset all traditions and usages of the House of Commons, after pointing to those obstructing : " Oh, they are gentlemen ; they will never go that length."

The procedure thus initiated was followed by

others who had no such limitations, and with results known to all who now follow House of Commons debates and behaviour. Gladstone was really proud and fond of the House of Commons, of its conduct and procedure ; yet by overtaxing its strength and endurance he brought into existence practices which recently have robbed it alike of reputation and efficiency. His original Cabinet of 1868 was composed of men of exceptional ability. Most of those who were in the Commons broke down or faded away from public life after 1874, and their collapse was unquestionably due to the overstrain of attendance in the House of Commons. In those days, being at the House meant for a Cabinet Minister being in the House itself. There were no private rooms for Ministers, except one for the Prime Minister and a kind of small den which was reserved for the Leader of the Opposition. Ministers, therefore, had to do their official work out of House of Commons hours, and though the House of Commons was full of Cabinet Ministers in attendance, their offices seriously suffered from the lack of the necessary initiative and supervision.

CHAPTER V

Defeat of Government on Irish University Bill—*Lothair*—Alabama Treaty—Motion in Commons and debate—Gladstone's speech—Chairman of Ways and Means.

IN the session 1873 Government was beaten by three on the second reading of the Irish University Bill. Gladstone resigned, but his great opponent declined to take office at that moment, and the speech in which he justified that refusal was one of the most prescient and statesmanlike to which I ever listened.

Gladstone was beaten by the Irish Roman Catholic vote. In the preceding Government Disraeli had tried to bring them into his fold and failed. Each statesman retaliated characteristically. Gladstone subsequently wrote the pamphlet known as *The Vatican*, Disraeli the novel *Lothair*.

Lothair is an excellent example of the strong and weak sides of Disraeli's genius and literary power. There is a great deal of tinsel and frippery in the descriptive portions of this novel, and many in reading it assumed that it was to record the incidents and surroundings of the life of a great ducal family that Disraeli took up his pen. But inside and throughout the social narrative ran an ethical and religious purpose, so subtly interwoven with inflated descriptions of splendid

life that the superficial reader hardly grasps its purport. It was a deadly exposure of the insidious methods and tricks by which the Roman Catholic Church is occasionally recruited. I heard Dean Stanley say—and he was very antipathetic to Disraeli—that the polemical argument of that novel was the ablest and cleverest exposure of Roman Catholic methods that he had ever read, and he wondered how Disraeli had been so intuitively able to master its subtleties.

The Vatican was coarse bludgeon work compared with the fine swordplay of *Lothair*, and prominent Roman Catholics have on several occasions told me that *Lothair* was felt by the heads of their Church to be, of the two productions, by far the more serious and effective attack.

Later on in this session I brought forward a motion in connection with the arbitration treaty made with the United States for the settlement of the Alabama claims and certain other matters in dispute between Great Britain and the United States. Earl de Grey was Chairman of the British Commissioners, and he was made a Marquess for his management—or, to put it frankly, his mismanagement—of the British case. Sir Stafford Northcote was also a member of the Commission, but he accepted that task without consulting Disraeli, who was thoroughly annoyed at his undertaking this invidious duty. The well-known statesman, Sir John A. Macdonald, represented Canada, the respective Commissions being each five in number. Sir John is reported to have said that though he felt capable of combat-

ing five Americans, he could not, in addition, fight with four British colleagues.

The terms of the clause relating to compensation for the depredations of the Alabama were so loosely drawn that they might be held to include indirect or consequential damages, a claim which could easily have been made to amount to hundreds of millions of pounds. I was specially interested in the arbitration of what was the proper interpretation to be placed upon the Treaty of Oregon, so far as it defined the water boundary between the United States main coast and Vancouver Island. There were islands making three channels between the two coasts, of which the island of San Juan was the most important. I had a little property in Vancouver Island, and thus I became interested in this dispute, and I was well coached by a very able ex-official of the Hudson Bay Company.

Our case was disgracefully mismanaged. The American Commissioners contrived to get the British Commissioners to rule out certain interpretations of what was meant by the water boundary. The British Commissioners did not realise till too late that the interpretations thus excluded from the cognisance of the arbitration were the foundation of their claim as against the American claim. But they and the Foreign Office did something even more foolish. They never found out until they were irretrievably committed that, in consequence of these limitations upon the interpretation of the treaty, they were forced to base their claims upon arguments which the British Government had itself repudi-

ated in bygone times ; and they made the further incredible blunder of selecting as one of the representatives of Great Britain, Captain Prevost, who, in a similar capacity a few years back, had officially rejected the very contention he was now asked officially to support. The decision was a foregone conclusion, and the presentation and rejection of such a case undoubtedly did impugn the good faith of Great Britain as a consistent and straightforward disputant.

I talked over the case with some friends—the late Percy Wyndham, Baillie-Cochrane, and Matthew Ridley—and they were unanimous that I should bring the case forward. I went to consult Disraeli, who was very much interested by the statement I made, and he promised me Front Bench support, but told me not to divide upon it. The Government, he pointed out, were in a very weak Parliamentary position, and were tumbling to pieces, and he was very desirous of giving them no opportunity of pulling themselves together by giving them a majority upon anything that could be made a party issue.

I put down as a second notice upon going into supply the following motion :

“That this House, whilst approving of the principle of arbitration, regrets that Her Majesty’s Government allowed, upon that part of the Oregon Treaty referred to the Emperor of Germany for decision, a limited interpretation to be placed which was fatal to the just claims of the British Empire.”

After stating my case, which lay in a nutshell,

and which was quite incontestable, as shown by extracts of statements published in the Government Blue Book, I ended up by saying that my object in making the notice was to elicit so strong an expression of opinion as effectually to deter this or any Government who, either from incapacity or from holding opinions inconsistent with the duties which they had to perform, might feel disposed to enter into negotiations such as I now described. The representative of the Government was Lord Enfield, Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, my colleague in the representation of Middlesex. He was an excellent speaker and a most upright gentleman, and he knew what a bad case he had, and he did not attempt to bolster it up by misrepresentation or misquotation. Outside the Treasury Bench no one on either side said a word on behalf of the Government, and Gladstone, who was obviously much nettled at the severe reflections made upon the conduct of his administration, took away with him to dinner the Blue Book, which up to that date he had neither read nor known. He came back after dinner, having made a most perfunctory survey of the Blue Book, and upon the information which he had thus hastily obtained he made an impassioned speech. It exhibited him quite at his worst as an unfair and disingenuous disputant. He abstracted sentences from their context, he quoted extracts so inaccurately that it was hard to believe he did not do so intentionally, and he placed the most distorted and impossible interpretation upon the meaning of the plainest of words. He was at times so extravagant

in his misrepresentation that we could not help laughing at him.

Disraeli was delighted with the result of the debate. Even the Ministerial Press admitted that the Government had handled their case with singular *maladroitness*. As I had organised the attack I was very pleased to receive from some of the older and more experienced members of the party some kindly congratulations upon my management of the debate.

During this session an old and highly esteemed Member of Parliament became Chairman of Ways and Means. His elevation seemed to obliterate all the *savoir-faire* and tact he was previously supposed to possess. He could do nothing right, either in maintaining order or giving rulings or even in putting the simplest question. One night, after having put every question wrongly, he finally surpassed himself when directing a division by saying, not "The Ayes to the Right," and "Noes to the Left," but "The Right to the Left—The Ayes to the Noes." He did not long officially survive this exhibition,

CHAPTER VI

Rehabilitation of Disraeli's influence—Crystal Palace and Manchester speeches—White Brandy—Death of Lady Beaconsfield—Dissolution in 1874—Disraeli: his accessibility and kindness—Gladstone: his amazing Parliamentary gifts and sophistry—Effect of latter on opponents.

SINCE the general election of 1868 Disraeli had steadily improved his position, both inside and outside the House of Commons. At the opening of this Parliament he was unquestionably subject to the distrust and dislike of a large section of the older members of the Conservative Party. They had reluctantly supported his Reform Act of 1867, which was not in accord with their ideas of a restricted franchise. Many had done so in the vague hope that beneficial results might subsequently accrue to their party from its operations; but the heavy and general defeat in the boroughs of Conservative candidates greatly annoyed them, and they looked with resentment upon Disraeli as the leader personally responsible for the double catastrophe of an abandonment of their principles and of a heavy party defeat in consequence. But as session succeeded session this soreness evaporated under Disraeli's skilful leadership and brilliant oratory. The young men instinctively adhered to him. Old as he was, they felt that there was a juvenility and expansion in his ideas and policy which were more hopeful for the future than the

narrow and contracted beliefs of the middle-aged ultra-Tories. Outside the House his prestige and popularity had risen enormously.

In these days, when in the populous districts we poll tens of thousands of Conservative working-men's votes as a matter of course, it is hard to put ourselves back to the period of which I am writing, when one of the dominant beliefs of the Radical Party was that no such individual as a Conservative working-man existed. If a wage-earner voted for a Conservative, it was because he was either a sycophant or had been bribed or had been intimidated. But that he should honestly prefer a Conservative to a Radical candidate was incredible—for what had he to conserve? Disraeli, on the other hand, always believed that the main strength of the Radical and Nonconformist Party (and Radicalism and Nonconformity were then and are still almost convertible terms) was in the lower grades of the middle-classes, and that if you got below the £10 householder you would find a less prejudiced and more patriotic section of society than when you went a little above that figure.

His colleagues had very great difficulty in inducing Disraeli to take part in big gatherings of the recently enfranchised electors. In those days political meetings of thousands were few and far between. They were big political events, and the speakers were reported verbatim and expected to say something new or at least worth hearing. Speeches so made continued for some time after their delivery to be the subject of criticism and approval in the leading articles of the big news-

papers. It was therefore much more of an effort for an ex-Prime Minister to go to such gatherings then than it is now. The audience, both inside and outside—if I may use such an Irishism—was then much more expectant and much more critical than it is now.

Disraeli had not been well himself, and his wife was in bad health, and it was only under great pressure that he undertook platform work. The first of these meetings was in the Crystal Palace, the audience being Westminster and London Conservative working-men. My father was in the chair. Disraeli made a fine speech, and amongst other dicta said that he contemplated the future with confidence, “as he relied on the sublime instinct of an ancient people.” Great fun was made of this sentence. Punch had a cartoon representing my father as a footman bringing in a card from a deputation and asking what he should say to them, and Disraeli giving him the above message.

We are now in the middle of the greatest war this world has ever seen. Who would laugh at or repudiate the truth of this prophecy? For it is upon the “sublime instinct of an ancient people” that we are relying for our ultimate success, and it is that instinct which supports the people of this country in submitting to the hardship and privations necessary to ensure success.

My father was a natural orator, though for many years of his life he had never opened his lips in public, and he spoke exceptionally well on this occasion. Disraeli complimented me, as he was going away, on his speech, and I said prosaically :

“ Yes, he is a good speaker.” “ He is more than that,” was the reply ; “ he has an eloquence which should lead the House of Lords.” The meeting was a great success.

A year or two later Disraeli went to Manchester. This meeting had an historical significance, for Disraeli there laid down that certain principles should be the object of our home and foreign policy. These were universally accepted by the Conservative Party, and even the Radicals, when in office, have been compelled reluctantly to adopt them. The speech was a direct challenge to Gladstone's recent propaganda of disunion and demolition.

A funny little incident occurred in connection with this meeting which is worth narrating. In his latter days a long speech physically exhausted Disraeli, and he required some stimulant whilst speaking. In 1867 on a big debate upon the Reform Bill he was ill and faint, and as he rose to speak he told one of the Whips to bring in brandy and water mixed strong. His request was so amply complied with that Disraeli unconsciously drank a big tumbler of liquid, two-thirds of which was brandy. The effect was, I am afraid, apparent towards the end of his speech ; his voice was husky and his peroration confused. Ill-natured comment upon the close of his speech and its cause was rife and got round to his ears ; so when he came to Manchester he determined that nothing he drank should in colour or appearance give the enemy the opportunity again to blaspheme. But he required his stimulant. He sent for Monty Corry, who accompanied him to Man-

chester, on the morning of his meeting, and said : " There is such a thing as White Brandy ; you must get me a bottle of it." Monty doubted if there was such an article, but he did as he was told. He went all over Manchester from wine merchant to public-house keeper in search of this liquid. He was told by most of those he visited that such a thing did not exist, but at last he came across someone who told him there was both white and dark brandy, and that some small wine merchant would probably have both. He went to the address indicated, bought a bottle of this precious liquid, mixed it carefully with water, took it in a flask to the meeting, and placed a big tumbler of apparently pure water on the table before his Chief. The speech was very lengthy and achieved an immediate and far-reaching success.

Subsequently, in the year 1873, Disraeli was elected for the year Rector of Glasgow University. This was a great triumph for him, and he delivered his rectorial address and subsequently remained some days in Glasgow. His visit was a continuous success. The address was admitted to be of a very high literary standard, initiating principles and ideas both original and sound, and he made a series of other speeches, one on currency, one on business, and one purely political, all of which delighted his Glasgow audiences. He returned to the Metropolis with a fresh reputation. In the meantime, the authority and popularity of his great rival had decreased year by year.

About this time Lady Beaconsfield died. Her death was a terrible blow to Disraeli. On more than one occasion he told me that he was thoroughly

miserable. His devotion to his wife was admitted by all. There thus sprang up a kindly sympathy towards him which, together with the exceptional ability and energy he had shown as leader, secured him the unanimous support of his party. He was therefore in a position, whenever the election took place, to contest on more than equal terms the political supremacy of Gladstone.

At the commencement of 1874 Mr. Gladstone summoned Parliament to meet in February, but a few days before that date, to the amazement of the whole political world, he suddenly dissolved Parliament. The reasons for this extraordinary and unexplained change remained a mystery for many years ; but the life of Lord Selborne, who was then Mr. Gladstone's Lord Chancellor, explained the cause of this political somersault. Mr. Gladstone was Member of Parliament for Greenwich, but owing to the closing of the Dockyard there he was very unpopular, and he was very likely to be beaten whenever a fresh election occurred. Towards the end of 1873 he took over, in addition to his original office of First Lord of the Treasury, the post of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, but he did not offer himself for re-election, contending that he was not compelled to do so, as he had already been elected for his primary office. Lord Selborne took the reverse view, and there is no doubt that his opinion was legally correct. (Mr. Asquith in 1914 took the office of War Minister, in addition to that of Prime Minister, and he submitted himself for re-election.) Gladstone was therefore in a quandary, out of which he could only extricate himself by a general

election, and the appeal he thus made placed him in a substantial minority and reinstated Disraeli as Prime Minister.

During the Parliament thus terminated, I had made many friends, and Disraeli took constant and kindly notice of me, praising me when he thought I had done well, but snubbing me when I was bumptious. One day I said to him : " You see, Mr. Disraeli, that I was quite right in all I said the other day." " Oh, were you," said he ; " then, my dear boy, say it all over again."

He liked the young men of the party to come and talk to him in the lobby during divisions. He nearly always stood with his back to a fireplace, and he was interested in any little piece of gossip or rumour relating to current events, as he wished to know what was going on outside Parliament. Many were the terse and witty replies he would make to our communications. From a literary point of view, he greatly disliked the multiplication of periodical magazines, and on my asking him if he had seen the *Nineteenth Century*, then just started, he said : " No, my dear boy ; I hate your new magazines. You will live to see the time when everybody can scribble, and nobody write."

Disraeli was so complex a personality that only those who knew him and whom he liked came in contact with the fine and fascinating traits of his inner self. He was much more sensitive than was generally believed ; his immovable and sphinx-like callousness in debate was originally a pose, but it gradually became second nature. He was profoundly conscious of

his unpopularity in certain quarters, and especially amongst those with whom he was most anxious to establish kindly relations. To those whom he liked and who were intimate with him, he revealed an extraordinarily kind and magnanimous disposition. He was the staunchest of friends and most brilliant and entertaining of hosts. When I knew him, he was advanced in years, and his health was indifferent, and he suffered from a kind of gouty asthma which was very difficult to relieve or counteract. It was only when he was excited or spurred up that he would exhibit his superlative conversational charms.

In 1869 I dined with Lord Stanhope, the historian. It was a small party, but it comprised Disraeli, Charles Dickens, and Motley, the American historian. There was no love lost between these three. After dinner, Lord Stanhope started conversation on various topics. In a few minutes Disraeli entirely dominated the conversation, and so brilliant and original were his remarks that the other two magnates seemed to enjoy them.

To me Disraeli was not only a leader and adviser, but in many ways he behaved more like an elder relative than a political chief, ever ready to listen to what one had to say, and, no matter how occupied, ever ready to give his advice to the matter placed before him. His mannerisms and gait were, to a large extent, foibles, and they disappeared with the generation to which he belonged; but the proofs of his prescience, resource, sound judgment, and patriotism remain, and his name and policy, as years roll on, will be

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more and more esteemed by the present generation and those that are to come.

His great rival, Gladstone, was just as interesting a study. I doubt if there has ever been a man in politics during the last two centuries who combined such extraordinary physical and mental gifts. His knowledge was varied and great. His power of work and assimilation was amazing, his capacity to stand fatigue and long hours equally remarkable ; he was endowed with unusual physical courage and unlimited assurance. For Parliamentary purposes he was unquestionably the most efficient and eloquent speaker of his generation, his voice, elocution, and gestures being almost faultless. Others might occasionally strike a finer note or give a higher intellectual flavour to a speech after careful preparation ; but with or without preparation Gladstone always spoke superbly well so far as the technique of speaking was concerned, and with an apparent conviction and a histrionic power that were most impressive. Without an effort he could, always assume the attitude which most appealed to the sympathies of his audience, and his general pose was that of a very good man struggling with wickedly minded opponents. When I first got into the House of Commons, I was immensely struck by his personality, and though I did not agree with him it was a physical pleasure to me to hear him speak and argue ; but, little by little, a suspicion was awakened, which grew and developed, as to how far all these protestations had their origin in high motives or principles, or were merely a part of his political baggage. As

his Government became weaker his passionate appeals became stronger and more exalted, and then the conviction was slowly forced upon me that the main inspiration of his transcendental attitudes was to keep a majority in his lobby. His power of twisting the plain meaning of words and explaining away obvious facts was so extraordinary as to create the belief that whatever he wished he really did believe. For instance, he had two appointments to make under Statute—one legal, one clerical. The Statute laid down that the lawyer to be appointed must be a judge: Gladstone appointed his Attorney-General. The clerical Statute laid down that an Oxford graduate must be appointed to the living of Ewelme: Gladstone selected a Cambridge man. What annoyed me was not the transgression of the Statutes, but the defence made for these transgressions. The original offences were forgivable, but the defence was unforgettable.

No statesman in my time possessed anything approaching his marvellous histrionic power. It is true that the pose was always the same *vir pietate gravis*; but the wonderful adaptation of this pose to every Parliamentary difficulty and contingency was an exhibition of the highest art, and this pose so grew upon him that it became to him second nature.

It is always reported that Parnell, on his one solitary visit to Hawarden, was asked by one of Gladstone's daughters whom he considered to be the greatest actor that he had ever seen, and to her perturbation he replied: "Without doubt, your father."

If you believed in him, he became to you a Parliamentary Superman ; if you suspected him or detected him in what you believed to be tricks, then dislike rapidly hardened into repulsion and wholesale distrust. So it came to pass that no statesman had as supporters a more devoted clientèle, or as antagonists more irreconcilable opponents. The latter group was constantly augmented by colleagues who left him on his not unfrequent abandonment of his previous principles, and their place was filled by political recruits representing the recently enfranchised and more advanced sections of political thought.

CHAPTER VII

1874 election—Results—Why I became Under-Secretary of State for India—India Council and Office—Speech on Famine in 1874—Congratulations—Lord Salisbury: his charm as a Chief and wit—Procedure before supply in 1874—W. H. Smith: his chivalrous character and sense of duty—Butt and Home Rule Party—Church Regulation Bill—Deposition of the Gaekwar of Baroda.

THE result of the general election in 1874 was a great personal triumph for Disraeli. It was the first time since 1841 that the Conservative Party had a large majority in the House of Commons. That majority could not have been obtained under the old franchise. Our gains were chiefly in towns, and notably in large towns; but the success was obtained on comparatively small polls. I have carefully watched the polls of general elections for nearly fifty years, and this rule may safely be laid down, that the Conservatives get their Parliamentary majorities on comparatively low polls, their opponents on big polls. The reason is obvious—the Conservative or Unionist Party is by far the strongest and most homogeneous single party in the country, but if everybody who is not a Conservative votes against it the aggregate votes of all other parties will outnumber the votes of the one party. Our party can generally poll its full strength. If there be abstentions and disunion amongst the motley

groups of our opponents, we are likely to win. In 1874, 1886, 1895, and 1900 there was this disunion and this abstention, and we won. Now, those who lead us ought always to have this truism before their eyes. Recently a policy has been started which, whatever may be its intrinsic merits or defects, tends to split up the Unionist Party and to consolidate all other parties in a solid vote against it. The result has been that the Radical Party have obtained a majority at three successive general elections—a continued electoral success unknown in this country since the franchise has been popularised.

At this general election I was fortunate in securing as a colleague Mr. Coope, who came forward as a second Conservative candidate for the county of Middlesex. I had been very assiduous during the late Parliament in starting new local associations and in holding meetings in Middlesex, and my exertions were more than rewarded by a majority of over 5000. My political association with Mr. Coope lasted for eleven years. He was an admirable specimen of a successful business man, a good speaker, generous and full of fun and courage—in fact, a pleasanter or more capable colleague it would have been difficult to find.

All Tory feuds being settled by the success of this election, Disraeli was enabled to constitute a powerful Government, especially in the Lords, where Lords Cairns, Derby, Carnarvon, and Salisbury formed a quartette of exceptional ability. The three latter became respectively Secretaries of State for Foreign Affairs, the Colonies, and India.

I thought that I might be offered some minor

office, but I was very much surprised to see my name mentioned in a newspaper as Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs. I did not attach much importance to this statement, as I believed it to be only gossip, until I received a letter from a Cabinet Minister asking me to appoint his son as my private secretary. This Under-Secretaryship is considered to be the blue ribbon of its grade. I doubted if I could do the work, especially as my French was most indifferent, so I went to see Lord Derby, who told me that he had specially asked for me. I stated to him my difficulties; he listened considerably, and then said: "I will speak to Disraeli about you; we are both anxious that you should be in the Government." That evening I received the following charming note:

"DEAR G.,—If you like you shall be Under-Secretary of State for India. There is no necessity of speaking either Hindustanee or Persian, so I hope this proposition may get you out of your difficulties.—Yours sincerely,
D.

"Feb. 23rd, 1874."

So I became installed at the India Office with Lord Salisbury as my Chief and Sir Louis Mallet as my colleague and Joint-Secretary. Again my luck was in the ascendant, for it would have been impossible for a young man to have two more able and, in many senses, more diverse mentors than these distinguished men.

At that time Indian finance and administration attracted a great deal of Parliamentary criticism, and discussion upon Indian affairs was very frequent. Fawcett, the well-known econo-

mist, was the leader of the Indian Opposition. He was blind, and consequently at times suspicious and narrow-minded; but he was an absolutely straight man and I soon got to be on very good terms with him.

The great Indian Mutiny had only occurred fifteen years before, and this tragedy and its suppression brought an exceptional number of first-rate men to the front in India, and later on into the Indian Council. Its composition at this time and for one or two years afterwards was remarkable—Lord Salisbury, Secretary of State; Sir Louis Mallet, Permanent Under-Secretary of State; whilst amongst the Council could be found the names of Sir Richard Strachey, Sir Bartle Frere, Sir Henry Rawlinson, Sir George Clerk, Sir Robert Montgomery, Sir Frederick Halliday, Sir Henry Maine, Sir Garnet Wolseley, and Sir Alfred Wylde, a well-known Cavalry leader. Few Cabinets have contained men of such world-wide reputation, intellect, and experience, and, as a young man, it was to me a constant source of delight to associate with these big men and to get the advantage of their advice, which they were ever ready to give.

Thus I found myself again more by good luck than by my own merit the Parliamentary representative of one of the great Departments of State the work of which, as I subsequently found out, was peculiarly adapted to my bent of mind and aptitude. The India Office is a miniature Government in itself. There is not a branch of administrative or executive work connected with the big Government which is not represented inside

the Office, and the great bulk of the questions that come on from the Government of India are not trivial or prosaic details of administration, but questions either of importance or matters upon which there is difference of opinion or controversy or connected with change and reform. It is, therefore, a first-rate training for anyone likely to hold a high administrative office later on, provided he reads his papers and pays attention to his work. The papers are most voluminous, not only from their variety and number, but from the inordinately long Minutes in which the Indian official mind revels. It is said to be a tradition inherited from Warren Hastings, who wielded a superlatively facile and vigorous pen. Sir Louis Mallet and I made a division of the work to be done, he giving me my full share. I found out afterwards that, at the time of my appointment, he complained to his friends of Disraeli's practical joke in sending a young ex-Guardsman to look after Indian Finance in the House of Commons, and I think he gave me this mass of work to see if I was of any use.

I have always had a good memory, and I also have a knack of reading very fast. In a little time I began to revel in these huge piles of papers. The satisfaction of improving or passing some long or complicated dispatch, and then adding my initials to it, gave me a sense of real power and the feeling that I was something more than a mere fly on the wheel.

In 1874 there was a very exceptional drought in parts of Bengal, where rain seldom failed and where consequently the population was very dense.

In a drought a few years back, owing to inertia and mismanagement, more than a million persons had died in Orissa alone. The Press and the public were now on the *qui vive*, and numbers of correspondents were writing home sensational accounts of the existing distress and of the indifference of the Government. There was a general expectation that Lord Salisbury, then in the prime of his vigour and a prompt and daring administrator, would infuse energy and success into the measures to be taken. The mass of papers upon the subject was appalling. I tackled them as best I could, working without interruption many hours a day. The night Parliament met I was told that I must bring in a Loan Bill next day for ten millions and give a full account of the extent and nature of the scarcity and of the various measures the Government proposed for its alleviation. This was a short notice for a task of such magnitude, but I worked very hard next day, trying to get the enormous mass of material with which I had to deal into an intelligible and consecutive shape. It was my first ministerial effort, and amongst the older men on our side there was a natural jealousy and dislike to my sudden promotion over their heads, and the speech was of a very different character from any that I had ever made before in Parliament.

I did not get up till eleven o'clock. I was nervous, the House was tired, and the subject was not one which elicited either applause or dissent. However, I stumbled along, keeping to my sequence of arrangement and distribution of figures and details. I sat down conscious that I had got through

my job, but done no more. Again, to my great surprise, my speech was considered a success, for I got the following letter from Lord Derby :

“DEAR HAMILTON,—Allow me, though rather late, to congratulate you on the complete success of your first ministerial speech. I hear of nothing else. Disraeli says it is the best he remembers ; and all our colleagues in the Commons hold the same language.

“You see you need not have doubted as to your fitness for that kind of work.—Very truly yours,
DERBY.”

This letter naturally elated me, though I felt he had put my speech on much too high a pedestal ; but a short time afterwards I received a letter from a very intimate friend of Disraeli, to whom he wrote describing my speech in the following terms :

“But the great coup of the night was George Hamilton’s, who introduced our India Bill.

“He spoke under great disadvantages, at eleven o’clock in a house somewhat wearied by the previous debate, but he realised my warmest hopes and anticipations. His aplomb was perfect, his voice melodious ; his manner dignified and without pomposity, and very graceful—and nothing could be more clear than his narrative, and considering that a month ago, he may have heard of Bengal, but certainly not of Behar, it was really marvellous with what picturesque lucidity he described the Northern and Southern Provinces of the Ganges. He obtained universal applause, and seemed as much appreciated by

those opposite as by his friends. This is a triumph for me !!”

The last sentence explains Disraeli's curious personal interest in me. He apparently had personally selected me, very young, quite unknown and without repute or experience, as one likely to get on in politics, and from that time up to the end of his life he never failed to give me a lift whenever he could—in fact, he was a political godfather to me.

It may seem egotistical and conceited to quote approval of individual speeches from persons of authority and good judgment, for one is conscious that, in the course of one's life, one must have made many indifferent and bad speeches about which one's friends are silent; but in this case approval from such high authorities instilled into me at the commencement of my political career a confidence and self-reliance which helped me out of a good many difficult positions in which during the tenure of a long period of office I found myself involved. Making a long speech in the House of Commons upon an Indian question was a trying ordeal, but admirable practice. In the vast majority of cases the subject is non-party, the audience small and generally critical if not hostile. The cheers and interruptions, such as encourage a speaker making a party speech or speaking upon a controversial topic, are wholly wanting. An atmosphere of chilling hostility or indifference surrounds you, and it requires self-possession and concentration to be able to pursue evenly and uninterruptedly the tenor of your mapped-out

speech. Yet you must persevere and be careful in what you say, for every word of a speech which may not interest those to whom it is addressed is a subject of minute and often unfair criticism by the Indian Press and educated classes in India. I can say this with some experience, for I have introduced thirteen Indian Budgets.

Lord Salisbury was then Secretary of State for India. He was in the zenith of his vigour. Those only who served under him, and whom he liked can have any idea of his charm as a Chief, or the delight of working in subordination to him. His extraordinary quickness of apprehension spoiled one, for you rarely had to finish a sentence before he intervened with a remark anticipating your conclusion. He was a wonderfully concise draftsman. Over and over again, when I brought him an answer to an embarrassing question which, with the aid of heads of departments, we had contrived to boil down to, say, two pages, he would reply, taking up his pen: "A good answer; still, it might be put thus," and reducing our long statement to two or three sentences, he would cover the ground more effectively than we had done with the long answer.

He could transact an enormous amount of business quickly and thoroughly, and he maintained an extraordinarily high literary level in all his writings, dispatches, and speeches. Of all the political speakers and writers of his generation, he will in the future be regarded as the greatest master of crisp, compact, and epigrammatic English. Most courteous and considerate to his subordinates, he exacted from them in return full

measure. Never ruffled or perturbed, he would give equally close attention to the most meticulous matter as to a big question of policy. The kindly relations now established between us lasted throughout his life, and by his death I lost, not only a noble Chief, but an old and proved friend. On thinking over his career, let us hope that he is not the last *grand seigneur* to hold the post of Prime Minister of England.

The following incident occurred a good many years ago at Hatfield ; but it is an excellent illustration of his quick wit. At a large dinner-party there, a bumptious young man, very much up to date, was teasing his neighbour, an old-fashioned squire, whom Lord Salisbury highly appreciated. The young man constantly referred to him as "Philistine." At last the old gentleman testily replied : "I don't know what you mean by a Philistine." "Don't you ?" said Lord Salisbury. "A Philistine is a gentleman who is annoyed by the jawbone of an ass."

It is curious how often private life contradicts and reverses the popular ideas of big public men. In public life you could not find a trio of more sarcastic and stinging speakers than Salisbury, Disraeli, and William Harcourt. I was intimately acquainted with all three, but, whatever they might say in public, I never knew any one of the three to do an unkind act intentionally, and, not only to their friends and associates, but even to their opponents when in trouble or distress, they were ever considerate and helpful.

The big Conservative majority returned at this election upon the enlarged franchise made Disraeli

for the time being omnipotent. His prophecies had been realised, his revilers were for the time being silenced, he had command of the whole intellectual and social resources of the party, and the Cabinet which out of these elections he had constructed was one of exceptional strength and authority. The underlings of the Government were naturally untried men, and the chief of these were W. H. Smith, Secretary to the Treasury, Stanley (afterwards Lord Derby), Under-Secretary at the War Office, James Lowther, and Robert Bourke, representing respectively the Colonial and Foreign Offices. These four were my constant associates, and a jolly and united crew were we. In those days the Under-Secretary representing big departments had to face a great many more debating motions affecting their departments than is now the case. Tuesday throughout the session was given to motions of private Members, and on Fridays supply was taken ; but in those days before you got into supply, any or all of the motions attached to the order of the day to go into supply could be taken before supply was obtained. You had, therefore, to be constantly ready with a speech on a multiplicity of questions, as it was almost impossible to foresee what notice might be brought forward. When supply was reached, it was rapidly and easily obtained, whole classes of votes being granted in a single sitting.

The modern practice is the reverse : the House goes at once into supply and wastes many days in desultory talk, the main object of which are attempts of individual Members to get on behalf of their constituents a larger share of the

public funds. On the other hand, there is now little opportunity for private Members who are specialists or authorities upon certain classes of subjects to air their views. These Members, though at times a bore, are a useful public search-light and, by constantly speaking on what they understand and have studied, their names become associated with such subjects, and a good lead is given to the Prime Minister of the day as to the eligibility of men for minor office.

But of all my contemporary colleagues there was none who so attracted me, or for whom I had such regard and admiration as W. H. Smith. Though older than myself, he got into Parliament at the same time—he as Member for the City of Westminster, I as Member for Middlesex. We were the only two Conservative Members representing a vast population which was contained in the whole county of Middlesex, and therefore we were obliged to act a good deal in concert, and I very soon got to know him very intimately. He was a very remarkable man, quiet, unassuming, with no special power of speech or expression, and handicapped by a weak voice; but he hid under this modest exterior rare capacity, courage, and judgment. In his private life he was the highest-minded and most chivalrous man I ever met. It was these latent qualities—the value of which, in spite of his reluctance to push himself forward, became more and more impressed upon his colleagues—that led to his being forced up in every political crisis to a higher position; and in all these crises this kindly, quiet-mannered man was sent to the post of danger. Ultimately, he

became, for a troublous five years, Leader of the House of Commons. In that position he led, with an unprecedented success, a coalition of parties composed of almost irreconcilable elements against the continuous attacks of two such Parliamentary giants as Gladstone and Parnell. Session after session he beat them on every point. It is impossible to exaggerate the influence which he had over his colleagues, because how could anyone refuse to do what he was asked when it was known that the asker was, out of a sheer sense of duty, discharging work which he greatly disliked, and the demands of which were slowly but surely sapping away his life? There was one gesture of his which we all knew and to which there was no denial. When asking you to undertake something you very much disliked, he would, after listening to your objection, put his hand on your shoulder, and say: "I must ask you to do this." And do it we did.

His rare business aptitude and his sense of justice soon became known to Disraeli, who, whenever there was any departmental or other difficulty of a business character which required unravelling, simply said or wrote: "Refer it to Mr. Smith for his decision;" and his decision was always accepted without demur. Of all the leaders of the House of Commons whom I have known, I put W. H. Smith unquestionably the first as regards success and results. The only serious difficulty he got into was over "Parnellism and Crime," and this was entirely due to two prominent Unionist Members concocting after dinner, over a second bottle of port, a foolish and

thoughtless motion which they brought forward on the plea of privilege before Smith could stop them. Thus originated the whole of the subsequent trouble.

Smith disliked long speeches. He loved to promote business. He was, in that sense, rather a terror to his colleagues, for just as you got to the best or most critical part of your speech you would feel a gentle tug at your coat-tails and a suggestion: "Have you not said enough?"

Whilst he was Leader nothing escaped his attention; he had his hand on everything and everybody. He was indefatigable, working hard all day, and he not only always dined in the House of Commons himself, but he had covers laid in his room for those of his colleagues who on that day were in charge of Government work, and he expected them to dine with him. Immense good resulted from these dinners, though the only alternative bills of fare allowed—"Mutton Cutlets" one day and "Grilled Chicken" the next day—became rather monotonous towards the end of the session.

The Baring crisis occurred during the time he was First Lord of the Treasury. It was so quietly overcome that until the crisis was passed few in the Cabinet were aware of the magnitude of the trouble. I saw Smith at the end of that week, and I said to him: "How pale and seedy you look." "Yes," replied he, "and so would you if you had had upon you during the last week the task of preventing Baring's shutters from being put up." He then told me what he had done,

and I repeat it, as it is a good illustration of Smith's promptitude, generosity, and modesty.

Goschen was then Chancellor of the Exchequer. He had a big speech to deliver at Dundee, so Smith let him go, preferring to deal alone with the threatened financial cataclysm. When the full dimensions of the impending failure became known, panic-stricken City magnates told him that nothing could save the situation but Government credit. This Smith steadily refused. Finally, in an interview with the Governor of the Bank, he insisted that it was only through private guarantees that the credit of this great house could be sustained. "But do you realise, Mr. Smith," said the Governor, "what the amount is which has to be guaranteed?" "Perfectly," replied Smith; "and though I have nothing to do with the firm or the interests involved, you can put my name down for £100,000." With such a lead and admonition, the guarantee was started, and it attained a figure which nearly three times over covered the immense liabilities at stake.

Few Coalition Governments have in the last two centuries been successful. They start well, but are poor finishers. Smith reversed this experience. Upon Randolph Churchill's resignation in January 1886, Smith was forced into the leadership of a distracted party with little debating power behind him, with Churchill on his flank and Gladstone and Parnell on his front. The two branches of the Unionist Party, when they voted together, gave him a majority, but could they be made to vote together? Many of the

Radical Unionists who followed Chamberlain had never in their lives been in a Conservative lobby, and the Conservatives had only a few months back been fighting tooth and nail the unauthorised programme of Chamberlain and his followers. Yet Smith managed to make and to maintain for Parliamentary purposes one solid uniform party out of these unpromising materials ; and he not only saved the Union and, thanks to Arthur Balfour, restored law and order in Ireland, but he put upon the Statute Book a large number of useful and beneficial laws which have continuously borne good fruit.

At the close of his leadership his firm and gentle touch had so smoothed down and removed friction, squabbles, and antipathies between all branches of the Unionist Party, that from that day till now they have remained a homogeneous and consolidated organism.

But the work killed him. During the whole of the earlier period of this Parliament he suffered terribly from eczema. This disappeared in the spring of 1891, but he had in its place a curious form of gout which greatly debilitated him. At the close of 1891 the Kaiser paid a visit to this country, and he was entertained at Hatfield by Lord Salisbury. Smith had so far recovered from his indisposition as to be able to go down on the second day of the visit ; but either on his arrival or during the evening of that day he caught a chill. The next night there was a scene of unusual magnificence in the great Jacobean drawing-room of this splendid mansion. The Emperor and Empress's suite and entourage comprised the

élite of Germany, and England was represented by many beautiful women and great magnates. The huge room, with its blaze of electric light, was a compact mass of jewels, orders, and decorations and gorgeous gowns, the cream of the splendour and ability of two great Empires. But in a corner of this vast room sat poor Smith, huddled up in evident pain and with the unmistakable stamp of death upon his face. My wife persuaded him to go to bed before the party broke up, which he did ; but his colleagues in the House of Commons saw him no more, for within a few weeks he died, a broken and prematurely worn-out man—a martyr to duty.

The changes in the composition of this Parliament, as compared with its predecessor, so far as the rank and file were concerned, mainly consisted in a great reduction of the Radical section of our opponents and the return as a separate party of over forty Irish Members as Home Rulers under the leadership of Isaac Butt. Butt was an old-fashioned Tory, a very fine speaker of the florid type, and whose mission was to re-establish *en bloc* the old Irish constitution abolished in 1800. He had regard for the traditions of Parliament and the decencies of public life. He soon began to experience, after he had made a party, that like Frankenstein he had raised up a monster for himself which he could not control. On the Address he moved an amendment in favour of Home Rule. This amendment was strongly opposed both by Disraeli and Gladstone. The latter poured ridicule upon what he described as a “ragged scheme,” and I have often since

thought that if there were two words in the English language which summarised the shortcomings and impracticabilities of Gladstone's subsequent Home Rule Bills, they would be "ragged schemes."

Early in this session Gladstone published a letter stating "that he could not contemplate any unlimited extension of active political service at his age—before 1875 he must retire"; yet, curiously enough, the "ragged schemes" kept him in active politics for twenty years beyond that age.

The legislation of this session was uninteresting, with the single exception of the Church Regulation Bill. This was a Bill introduced by Dr. Tait, Archbishop of Canterbury, to keep under some sort of control the ritualistic vagaries of the extreme High Churchmen. We had then repeated *ad nauseam* the arguments always overlying any such proposal. On the one hand, it is maintained that the glory of the Established Church of England is its comprehension and tolerance; on the other hand, that there is little use in keeping up as a national establishment a Church which cannot enforce its own doctrines and rubrics. The High Churchmen in both Houses were in a very small minority, but Gladstone took up the cudgels for them. He revelled in these debates, and he produced six resolutions which, to an untutored layman, seemed to mean anything, everything, or nothing. His superlative power as an ecclesiastical controversialist was shown in a personal encounter with Sir William Harcourt, whom in the preceding year he had appointed

as Solicitor-General to his Government. The latter thought that he had caught Gladstone tripping on some points of canon and ecclesiastical law. He took two or three days to labour these points, and, without notice, came down with a carefully prepared attack upon his late Chief. The latter without an effort absolutely demolished him. Whether he was correct in his facts or quotations and information, I do not know; but it was a superb oratorical effort.

Having taken this action in the House of Commons, he almost simultaneously published a violent attack upon the Papal Episcopacy entitled *The Vatican*. So popular was this effusion that 100,000 copies of it were sold within a week.

The year 1874 was also noticeable for the first agricultural labourers' strike, but for lack of funds and organisation it failed.

In India we had in this and the subsequent year a very good illustration of the danger of applying without full consideration Western methods of jurisprudence in Oriental countries when dealing with grave political misdemeanours committed by native princes or persons high in authority. During Gladstone's tenure of office the Maharajah of Tonk, after repeated warnings, was deposed for continuous misconduct by Lord Lawrence, Governor-General, in the name of the Supreme Government, and a successor nominated in his place. This procedure was perfectly understood in India and gave little, if any, dissatisfaction.

I remember well the debate in the House of Commons. There are always to be found some Members of Parliament ready to take up a case

of this kind and to appeal to the British instinct of fair play by demanding a public judicial inquiry. Gladstone was annoyed by the action of the Indian Government, as it did not afford him the conventional Parliamentary defence. He therefore impressed upon Lord Northbrook, whom he shortly afterwards appointed Viceroy of India, that if he had any similar case to deal with he should institute a full, formal, judicial inquiry before deposition.

Mulhah Rao, the Gaekwar of Baroda, being in precedence and salute of guns one of the first native princes in India, was half a lunatic, and he had committed a series of outrages and atrocities of which there was an authentic record, culminating in an attempt in 1874 to poison the British Resident at Baroda, Colonel Phayre—under the old régime a clear case for summary deposition. Lord Northbrook, acting on the opinion of his old leader, proposed a Commission to try the Gaekwar. Lord Salisbury, not realising that the Commission was to be half native, agreed. The natives selected were princes and nobles of the highest standing; the rest of the Commission and the Chairman were British. Serjeant Ballantine, a well-known English criminal Counsel, was retained by the Gaekwar. The evidence was conclusive, but the native princes, finding themselves placed in a most invidious position, sent a private message to the Chairman stating that they could not convict, which meant the deposition of the Gaekwar, unless certain conditions were agreed to as regards a successor. There was nothing of corruption in the suggestion,

which was only made in order to save their face—using a colloquial expression—and to protect them against the charge of betraying their own order. To enter into such a negotiation meant bargaining to obtain a verdict. The Chairman was, as a matter of course, compelled to decline any such discussion. The verdict therefore became a racial one. All the British members found the Gaekwar guilty, the natives that the offence was not fully proven.

The Indian Government was therefore forced to do, under the circumstances, what it ought to have done in the first instance, namely, to depose the Gaekwar upon their own paramount authority. This was done, and did not raise a flicker of dissatisfaction in India.

Mr. A. M. Sullivan, a well-known Irish Nationalist Member, immediately put down a notice calling attention to the conduct of the Indian Government. Fortunately, we had an almost unlimited record of atrocities in support of our illogical action. This I most carefully prepared and compressed into a speech of terrific denunciation; but, alas! the Irishman never came up to the scratch, and my speech is still within me.

CHAPTER VIII

Hartington, Leader of Liberals: his character—Tichborne Bubble—Dr. Kenealy—Debate in Commons—Major O'Gorman and Dr. O'Leary—Development of obstruction.

AT the commencement of 1875, Gladstone resigned the leadership of his party. Lord Hartington was selected in preference to Forster to fill his place, and the support given him was strongest amongst the Radical section of the party. This decision was a great personal tribute to high character and straightforwardness, and reflected credit on the perception of the Radicals in preferring a ducal Whig to an able but somewhat uncouth specimen of their own class.

From this day forward, for more than thirty years, Hartington took a strong and leading part in the political work of the country. I knew him for the first ten years of that period as an opponent, for the next ten as an ally, and for the remaining ten as a colleague and friend. He was the stamp of man representative of the best type of English politicians and of the brightest and most patriotic side of the party system. He was the embodiment of truth, honour, and probity, with an intense sense of duty, a sportsman, a lover of the country and its pursuits, of racing, and with possessions and an independence which enabled him to get the best of everything he liked; yet he never for an

instant allowed the amusements or trivialities of life to interfere with the serious work of the rôle he had voluntarily and almost reluctantly undertaken. Though he cared little for office, he did not hesitate to accept its responsibility and limitations if he thought he could be of public use.

For the last twenty years of his life he found himself in constant opposition to Gladstone. He once said—and that probably is the best explanation of this difference—that words had not the same meaning for him as they had for Gladstone. Inferior as he was to his great opponent in general intellectual equipment, he had the advantage of possessing a thoroughly sound judgment, both of men and affairs, and unconquerable reluctance to being wheedled by words into transactions the ultimate consequence of which might bring him into collision with his convictions. Though a Whig, he was no time-server or opportunist; his mind was powerful and very concentrated, but it worked very slowly. In Cabinet and in conference I have heard him over and over again, after a subject had been disposed of and another topic had been well opened up, revert to the previous decision arrived at, and state some new and, as a rule, some forcible suggestion. From no one else would so disorderly a proceeding have been tolerated, but all submitted to it, annoying as it sometimes was, on account of the respect felt for the interrupter and the experience gained that there was generally something of substance and reason in the interruption.

He was Chairman of a Commission upon Army and Navy administration, and, as First Lord of the

Admiralty, I was examined before him. There were a number of able men upon the Commission, but the only one whose examination I found it difficult to sustain was Lord Hartington. He would apparently hardly hear your answer, he would then rub his nose, turn his back upon you, scratch the back of his head, and after a long pause turn round and hit with absolute precision the weak spot in your statement.

He once complained that it had been his misfortune to have controversies with two Prime Ministers, both of whom were Scottish and very quick thinkers, with a remarkable liking for dialectics, and he candidly admitted that he was not equal to the ordeal. He was a very effective speaker, but often dull and tedious to listen to, as he had none of the grand and histrionic attributes of the natural orator ; but he convinced those supporting him, he had attractive influence with the doubtful, and always gave his opponent a difficult task in reply. Though his mind worked slowly, its conclusions were generally convincing. I believe that, as a speaker, the slow thinker gets advantages in not thinking quickly ; his ideas are less likely to outpace his words. He hammers out and elaborates his points and arguments, but, as a large proportion of those to whom he is speaking are probably also slow thinkers, he gets an affinity with a large number of his audience which is helpful to both.

During the session the most extraordinary bubble which I can ever recollect burst, after having obtained phenomenal proportions. For some years past, legal proceedings of various kinds

had been continuously going on in connection with the claim to the large estates of the Tichborne family. The heir to this property had disappeared many years before, and it was universally believed, though it was never actually proved, that he had been drowned in a ship which went down with all hands on board. His mother clung to the belief that her son was still alive, and she finally welcomed and acknowledged as a son an ex-butcher known as Arthur Orton. He was twice the size of the heir he personated, and in many ways, especially in habits, manners, and language, his antithesis ; but he was very clever and audacious, and, owing to a series of blunders made by the Tichborne family and the dexterous use he made of documents and information which he obtained from the Dowager Lady Tichborne, he was able, apart from his personal appearance, to establish something like a *prima facie* claim. This slowly broke down under examination and trial, and the final result of a long series of litigation was his conviction as a perjurer and forger.

A considerable proportion of the English people still believed in him. Hostile demonstrations were made against the judge and barristers associated with his conviction, and the cry of this large section of the community was : " It may be he is a butcher, but that is no reason why he should be deprived of his rights." The line that had been taken by Orton's advisers and solicitors in Court was such that most of the respectable barristers declined to have anything more to do with the case ; but Dr. Kenealy, a barrister of some literary power and ability, undertook his

defence. He so grossly misconducted himself in this position that his conduct led to his being disbenched and removed from the list of Q.C.'s. The fact that he was so punished inflamed the agitation in favour of the claimant. So strong was the feeling temporarily, that there is little doubt that, if in the early part of 1875 a general election had occurred, the claimant's party would have been well represented in the House of Commons. As it was, at a by-election in the Potteries, Kenealy was returned, having polled the large number of over 6000 votes.

It is the practice of the House of Commons to require a new Member to be introduced by two old Members. So bad was Kenealy's reputation, and such offence had his wholesale slanders created, that no one would on this occasion go sponsor for him. Disraeli disposed of the difficulty by moving that the House of Commons should on this occasion dispense with the practice. After taking his seat, Kenealy did little beyond putting a question or two to establish the wholesale charges of corruption, perjury, and fraud which he had made broadcast outside the House of Commons against the witnesses, counsel, and judges connected with the case. Finally, he was forced to frame his indictment. He spoke well ; but he had no case, and he knew it, and the House was so icily cold that no orator could have overcome its antipathy.

The debate was remarkable for two speeches—one by Bright and the other by Disraeli. Each was excellent in its way, and, in combination, they pulverised the whole case. Bright had been ill during the greater part of these trials,

and he occupied himself daily by reading the evidence of this interminable case. With his accustomed skill, he put his fingers on the weakest points in the case, and, in his concise and inimitable phraseology, drove every point home. Disraeli was equally successful in his peculiar style. The Lord Chief Justice Cockburn, who tried the criminal case, had been injudicious in some private utterances, and he was ferociously attacked by Dr. Kenealy. I remember one sentence of the defence—it was so thoroughly Disraelian: "The Lord Chief Justice of England is not the man to enter a crowded and gilded saloon with the countenance of Rhadamanthus."

When Kenealy divided, he had as teller Mr. Whalley, who was hardly normal, and one supporter, Major O'Gorman. Major O'Gorman was one of the fattest men I ever saw. He was very clever, with a witty tongue which late at night was not always very distinct. He was an old officer, and, curiously enough, when young, was slim and one of the fastest runners of his day. He was an amusing character and, in common with other Irishmen, soon began to find out what opportunities the rules and procedure of the House of Commons gave him for self-advertisement and obstruction. In contrast with him was Dr. O'Leary, Member of Parliament for Drogheda. He was a surgeon, and he owed his return to Parliament to his having declared that a police officer shot by a Fenian died, not from the bullet put into him, but from the unskilful surgical attempt to extract it. He was a very small man, with curly hair and a round face. He

was sometimes in our lobby, and his ambition was to be introduced to Disraeli, who was a great attraction to the Irish. One day he was brought up to Disraeli, who, looking over him, said: "I am pleased to be acquainted with you—you remind me of Tommy Moore." From that day onwards, his presence in our lobby was frequent and constant.

In this session, though it was humdrum as regards legislation, certain questions were started, and certain incidents occurred, which in their subsequent development have stuck to us ever since as a source of embarrassment. The Home Rule Members, annoyed by the passage, after very long debates, of a Peace Preservation Bill, were beginning to find out that, though through their votes they could not jeopardise the position of the Government, yet, by utilising the wide latitude which the slipshod rules and procedure of the House of Commons gave them, they could bring to a standstill the legislative and executive powers of the Government exercised through Parliament.

In those days there was no closure, no power whatever of terminating a debate. The practice of silencing by shouting "Divide," and thus making the speaker realise that the general sense of the House was against him, had no effect whatever upon the Irish Members. The more obnoxious and unpopular an Irish Member made himself in the House, the more popular he became with the irreconcilables in Ireland. As a very distinguished Member of Parliament said to me at this time: "The House of Commons is the citadel of

the Constitution; now you have traitors in the citadel who obtain popularity by advertising their treachery."

The Turkish Government repudiated this year their external loan. It was an adroit move by the enemies of that empire, and one which has precipitated its decadence and downfall, though its disintegration and disruption are not yet completed.

CHAPTER IX

Purchase of Suez Canal shares—Plimsoll and Merchant Shipping
—Scene in Commons—Whitebait dinner at Greenwich—
Debating power in Lords—Lord Cairns.

IN 1875 was held for the first time a South African Conference, and much which has since happened in that great region of the world is traceable to the start thus made.

In this year, but after Parliament was prorogued, Disraeli bought for four million pounds the ordinary shares in the Suez Canal held by the Khedive. This purchase gave Great Britain a substantial holding in Egypt, and contributed to our present dominance in that country. This coup of the Prime Minister so infuriated his old and habitual opponents that, both in the House of Commons in 1876 and on the platform, they indulged in language of extreme folly and quite devoid of prescience. Gladstone, after denouncing in violent phraseology the impolicy of the transaction from a political standpoint, characterised it as a financial transaction of the most ridiculous character. The purchase money was four millions: the value of the shares so acquired is now about forty millions.

Towards the end of the year we had an extraordinary scene in the House of Commons, initiating legislation which has saved many of the

lives of our seafaring population engaged in the tramp steamer business.

The Government, for lack of time, were compelled to curtail their programme of legislation, and, amongst the measures dropped, was a Merchant Shipping Bill, which, up to the date of its excision from the Government programme, had attracted little attention or support.

There was then in the House a whimsical Radical—Plimsoll by name—a curious mixture of philanthropy and self-advertisement. He had for some time been collecting and accumulating evidence as to malpractices of certain ship-owners, who, he asserted, deliberately sent out ships ill-found, unseaworthy, and risked and not unfrequently lost the lives of their employees and made money out of the transaction. The influence of the shipowners in the House of Commons was strong, for the vast majority were upright and honourable men, though, as a body, they were opposed to more severe measures of inspection and loading. Plimsoll heard that the Merchant Shipping Bill was to be withdrawn, and he seized his opportunity with consummate skill and assurance. As soon as the announcement was made in the House by the Prime Minister, he rushed into the gangway between the two sides of the House, gesticulating and flourishing his fists, and shouting out strong language. In vain the Speaker called him to resume his seat and obey the rules of order. He openly defied the Chair, walked up to the Government Bench, looked as if he was about to assault the Prime Minister, and, finally yielding to the persuasions

of his friends, left the House shouting: "Scoundrels, scoundrels, scoundrels!"

On the motion that he be reprimanded, his friends said that he had temporarily lost his head, but that next day he would apologise. The whole scene had been carefully thought out, and a near female relative of Plimsoll in the Ladies' Gallery dropped down printed circulars to the reporters as to what he was about to do and say, so that next day it might be fully advertised, and it was successful. Disraeli, with his extraordinary acumen, felt that there was something amiss. He looked into the matter, brought in a temporary Bill, and when Plimsoll came up for censure, he let him down easily, and, I think, finally expunged the notice of rebuke from the annals of the House.

To Plimsoll's credit must be put the course of subsequent protective legislation associated with his load-mark, and many thousands of our mercantile marine had in after years good reason to think gratefully of his name.

The old practice of dining at Greenwich on the conclusion of the session was continued by Disraeli's Government. Gladstone's Government had given up this annual fête, and it was assumed that the cause of its abandonment was that numbers of his Government were not on speaking terms one with another. On the occasion in question, Disraeli put me in the Chair. I had had an intimation that I was likely to be so selected. It was the Chairman's business to be as impertinent as possible and to play the fool as much as was permissible, and the main speech of the evening was made by him, in which he presented

a wooden spoon to that member of the Government whom he considered the greatest duffer. I made up my mind that I would give this spoon to the Prime Minister. I went downstairs and made friends with an intelligent still-room maid, and told her what I proposed to do, and that I wanted the biggest wooden spoon she could find and a piece of dark blue ribbon to tie it round the neck of the person to whom I presented it. She was immensely tickled at the idea and went off, and in a few minutes returned with a piece of bright blue ribbon and a huge wooden spoon about three feet long.

I took this up and concealed it under my chair, and when the moment arrived for making my speech I produced it, and at the close of my chaff proceeded to put it round Lord Beaconsfield's neck. He rose to the occasion, and in a most humorous speech said his one object in life had been to be decorated, that a spoon and "spooning" were interests of the very highest practical importance, that the world could not go on without them, and therefore he was only too pleased to be the latest addition to an order without which the world would terminate.

In the House of Lords at that time there was an exceptional array of first-rate speakers and administrators. On the Government side were to be found Lords Cairns, Derby, Salisbury, and Carnarvon, and opposite to them the Duke of Argyll, Lords Kimberley, Granville, and Selborne.

I used constantly to listen to the debates in the Upper House, especially on Indian subjects. The Duke of Argyll and Lord Salisbury were

beautifully matched. The first fiery, eloquent, and a complete master of all the arts of rhetoric, but apt to overstate his case: he had a huge mane of light-coloured hair, a small figure, and a splendid resonant voice. Cobden once likened him to "a canary-bird firing off a big cannon." Lord Salisbury was not an orator in the strict sense of the word, but he had an unfailing instinct for spotting the weak point in his adversary's argument, and possessed a pungent and concise power of expression and sarcasm which never failed him. The literary construction of his sentences was perfect.

But of all the speakers, Lord Cairns attracted me most. His sentences were short, with no effort at picturesque or rhetorical effect. He would indulge in the most elementary truths and make them part of his statement. At first you would say: "Here is a man who is only a master of elementary platitudes." In a little while you would feel that these platitudes were only a part of a great encircling movement, and, listening with increasing interest, you would feel that his adversary's flank was beginning to be turned, and before he sat down that he was hopelessly netted. The ease, regularity, and certainty with which he would expound his case misled one at first, and it was only later on that you recognised the organised power of the great brain which thus mechanically devised and carried out the demolition of his opponent's arguments. More than one of his Cabinet colleagues assured me that in an emergency he was, intellectually and in resource, the equal of Disraeli. Many lawyers told me that

if you once admitted Lord Cairns' premises you were undone, but to upset or dispute them was most difficult, for they were put in place and in order with the ease and regularity of a master mason building up a wall. He was one of the first of Disraeli's Law Officers, and it was reported that he so spoilt Disraeli as a Law Officer that he was never afterwards satisfied with any of his successors.

CHAPTER X

Indian officials—Sir Thomas Seccombe—"Royal Titles Bill": its wonderful success—Lowe's apology—Fall in price of silver: Goschen's report upon—Sir George Clerk—Unique position in India—Farewell and advice as to India's future.

1876 was an eventful Parliamentary year, and one which was very helpful to me personally. I had by this time established very satisfactory relations with all the officials at the India Office: I had worked hard, for out of office hours from the time of my appointment in 1874 I had read nothing that was not connected with India. Amongst a good deal of other literature, I read the whole of James Mill's *History of India*—a very tedious and overrated work. James Mill, like many literary partisans, obtained a character for impartiality by using judicial language as a cloak to cover his bias against his own countrymen.

In the House of Commons I had been fortunate enough to make no serious mistake, either in debate or questions, and as Chairman I had steered through Select Committees and safe into harbour one or two outstanding Indian difficulties. If I had been so far successful, this was largely due to the exceptional ability of several of the permanent staff at the India Office who were always ready to go out of their way to draw upon their experience and knowledge if such aid could be useful to me.

Several of the old East India Company's staff were left, and almost without exception they were men of unusual ability. When the India Office was created, it was manned by officials partly from the Board of Control and partly from the East India Company. Lord Derby, who undertook this task, told me that the East India Company officials were so superior to those of the Board of Control that it was very difficult to size them together.

As I had to manage Parliamentary Indian finance, I came much in contact with Sir Thomas Seccombe, the Financial Secretary. He was, from a financial standpoint, the ablest official I ever met, and he became my mentor in every branch of finance. I feel greatly indebted to him, for throughout my official life I always found his maxims and knowledge sound and practicable. "Bad finance, my lord," was a not unfrequent comment on some of my suggestions, and "bad finance" he would in a few words prove them to be. Sir Thomas was an official of the old style, very quietly dressed, high collars and a long frock-coat, and above it a pleasant but somewhat imperturbable countenance. One day he came to see me in a towering temper. I said to him: "Something has put you out, Sir Thomas." "Yes," he replied. "I have been at the Finance Committee, and they have overruled me as regards new taxation in India. That I did not mind, as they had a perfect right to do so; but Sir Louis Mallet kept quoting Mr. John Stuart Mill's opinion against me." His voice then became shrill with indignation. "Mr. John Stuart Mill! No one

knew Mr. John Stuart Mill better than I did ; we were great friends ; we were working together in the same room for many years. He was an admirable writer, but I can truly say that anyone who accepted Mr. John Stuart Mill's opinion on a question of practical finance would justly be esteemed an idiot."

This session was essentially an Eastern session. We had a Suez Canal Bill, a Royal Titles Bill, a very heavy fall in the price of silver affecting all Eastern exchange, necessitating debates on the subject, and we had further the recrudescence in a violent form of the political difficulties in the Eastern portion of Europe.

In all these questions I took a somewhat prominent part. The opposition to the purchase of the Suez Canal fizzled out ; it was mainly founded on financial pedantry and personal dislike of Disraeli. The Royal Titles Bill, by which the title of "Emperor of India" was added to the dignities of the Crown of Great Britain, gave rise to a more serious Parliamentary opposition. The Radicals did their best to get up a war-cry against a title which they declared was incompatible with British freedom and the British Constitution. But outside the House of Commons the agitation was a total failure. Inside the House we had long and acrimonious debates, in which, as my name was on the back of the Bill, I took part. To my delight I was one night put up to finish the debate by replying to Gladstone, and as I knew my case and he did not, I got the better of that redoubtable old gentleman. To the great amusement of our party the Radicals were furious. I was told that

it was the height of impertinence to put up "an unfledged magpie" to reply to the greatest man of the century. Someone sent me afterwards in a cage a very dilapidated specimen of that bird. The poor beast died next day.

These debates confirmed my previous opinion of the hopelessly narrow political horizon of the average Radical and political Nonconformist. Outside their special conventicle or their debating or political clubs they seem to have no ideals, no source of knowledge or inspiration. The insularity of the country in which they reside seems to conserve the dreary monotony of their conceptions. To master and appreciate the inside of a great national or imperial idea seems to be contrary to their whole physical and mental existence. A few do contrive to break away from this environment, but you can almost count them on your fingers.

Unfortunately, at the time of the transfer of India from the East India Company to the Crown, the ideas of the Manchester School of politics were very powerful in the House of Commons. The Act of 1858, though passed by a Conservative Government, has stamped right throughout on its face the doctrines of this school. A free Press, unlimited competition for entrance into the public services, the establishment of English literary degrees at the High Schools and Universities, and the abolition of all distinctions of colour, creed, race, and position were the panaceas for India's development. "As they worked well in England, let us enforce them upon India." Yet if the natives of education and high lineage

in India had had their say, these principles would be the very last they would themselves prescribe as a foundation for the development and happiness of their country. A Government in the East, to be successful, must be personal or associated with a title conveying the idea of a great personality. The title "Emperor of India" has done more to consolidate and popularise our rule in India than whole sheaves of purely utilitarian legislation. Our Sovereign, as Emperor of India, the *de facto* successor to the Great Mogul, attracts and obtains an allegiance and reverence which may have been latent, but which gave, previous to the adoption of this title, no symptoms of existence. The marvellous reception of our King in 1911 in India, at a time when seditious organisations were trying to murder his leading officials, was a revelation to those unacquainted with the reverence and veneration felt by India for its crowned Emperor. The happy spark of loyalty thus struck has burst out into a great flame when Germany threatened by war to destroy the British Empire, of which the Empire of India is so integral a part ; and it was the prescience and imagination of Disraeli which gave this additional bulwark to the retention of our position in the East.

Imperial statesmanship consists in thinking out and framing proposals which, from their intrinsic suitability to the sentiments of the localities they affect, without cost or charge, elevate and consolidate the fabric of national existence and defence. Such a measure has the Royal Titles Bill proved itself to be.

Subsequent to the passing of this Bill, a very

unpleasant incident occurred which I have never forgotten. Between Disraeli and Lowe much dislike existed. To discredit the former and associate him with sycophancy to the Crown, Lowe made a public speech in which, after violently attacking the Royal Titles Bill, he added that he knew for a fact that overtures had been made by the Crown to two preceding Prime Ministers to obtain for it this additional title, and that both Prime Ministers had refused. It soon became known in the lobbies that this allegation was unfounded, and Sir Charles Lewis, Member for Londonderry, a clever and adroit Parliamentary, made a motion calling for the production of the Oath of a Privy Councillor ; and in making this motion he accused Lowe of infringing the spirit, if not the letter, of the Oath which he had taken. Lowe was ill-advised enough to make in reply a very contemptuous speech, sustaining, or at any rate declining to withdraw, his allegation, whereupon Disraeli arose, and in a few sentences inflicted upon him the heaviest castigation that I ever recollect a prominent Parliamentary receiving. He stated that he had the Queen's authority to contradict Lowe's statement in its entirety, and added that, although the circulation of false statements could not be prevented, he could not believe that calumnious gossip concerning the Crown would have emanated from the lips of an old Privy Councillor.

Two days later Lowe made an abject apology, which, from its nature, was to him very humiliating. I was sorry for him, for with all his faults he was an intellectual of the first rank, a fearless

fighter, who under his saturnine exterior had a kindly instinct, of which I had the benefit upon several occasions.

For some years past there had been a heavy fall in the price of silver, largely due to the improved and cheaper methods of production. The standard of value in India was silver, and the rupee was the monetary unit of the country. In the course of comparatively few years, its exchange value in gold fell from two shillings to nearly one shilling. The Indian Government has to make heavy annual payments in gold in England to meet its obligations as regards salaries, pensions, interest, and stores, and this continuous fall in the exchange value of the rupee made an increasingly heavy charge upon its revenues: in fact, it began so to disorganise Indian finance as to cause great apprehension as to the ultimate solvency of the Indian Government.

I therefore moved the appointment of a Select Committee to investigate the subject, and I was fortunate enough to secure Goschen as Chairman. The facts were plain enough, but the remedy, if there was any available, involved gigantic consequences as regards exchange, finance, and currency. It was therefore necessary at this stage of the bi-metallic controversy to move warily and to take care not to encourage empirical experiments. This course could best be effected by laying down broad and indisputable propositions, the self-evident soundness of which disposed of certain suggestions emanating from the currency-mongers. Goschen's report admirably fulfilled these conditions.

In presenting the Indian Budget I had to speak at length upon this very complicated subject. I largely took Goschen's Report as my text, and I clothed his leading ideas in my own language. This speech I felt was a real success : I was congratulated on both sides of the House, and especially by Lowe. My usual luck had attended me. Without the Committee's and the Chairman's Report it would have been impossible for me to have spoken as I did ; but, being imbued with sound ideas on this question by one of the ablest economists of the day, from that time forward I always held the same views on bi-metallism, and I had the satisfaction, more than twenty years later, as Secretary of State, of giving a final blow to that theory by establishing a gold circulation in India.

Amongst the remarkable group of Anglo-Indians who were then upon the Council, to my mind the most striking personality was Sir George Clerk. When I first met him he was nearly eighty years of age, and he retired this year from the Council. He had a rare record of administrative work. After a most distinguished career in India, where he was the foremost civilian of his day, he became twice Governor of Bombay ; he was also Governor of South Africa and, in addition, the Permanent Under-Secretary at the India Office. He was the last of the great Anglo-Indian magnates who, through their character and personality, were a power in India far outside the sphere of their immediate jurisdiction. Tall, very good-looking, a splendid horseman and sportsman, a high-minded gentleman to his finger-tips, he was the ideal of a

just and benevolent autocrat. There are many excellent stories current of what he by his mere presence and force of will was able to achieve under circumstances of stress and difficulty.

On one occasion, while he was enjoying at Simla in the forties, before we had annexed the Punjab, a well-earned holiday from his duties as Political Agent for the native states of the then north-west frontier, news reached him that two of his Rajahs had quarrelled, that their respective armies had come in collision, and that the victorious army was besieging the capital of its antagonists. Clerk was very angry; he got down to the plains with great celerity, and then he began to gallop as quickly as was possible to the scene of action. He always rode in a short black coat.

In the meantime the besieging army had battered a breach in the wall of the beleaguered town, and an assault was arranged to be made early next morning. As day was breaking, the army was assembled. Someone, looking back, saw, in the dim distance, a tall figure in a black coat riding furiously. He got closer. "Sahib Clerk, Sahib Clerk!" went from rank to rank. The figure got nearer. The ranks wavered, then dispersed, and Clerk by his arrival alone saved the town from assault and capture.

Clerk was a firm believer in Great Britain governing India through her princes, nobles, and upper classes. He considered that good administration could only be secured by constant contact between our officials and these classes and by an exchange of views between the two. He held much the same opinion as Sir Henry Lawrence,

who in this respect differed from his distinguished brother, Lord Lawrence, the latter being in favour of working through and consulting the views and interests of Indian democracy.

Sir George came to my room to say good-bye to me, and he commenced his conversation by saying :

“ You are a young man, and you take a great interest in India. I dare say some day you will occupy a very high post in connection with India. Now let me give you a little advice. If you want India to be properly governed, you must blow up the Suez Canal, you must cut all the telegraph wires between England and India, and you must reduce the white European army from 60,000 men to 20,000 men.”

I said to him :

“ Your remedies are very drastic. I think I understand what you mean, but would you mind just amplifying a little more your ideas ? ”

He said :

“ Certainly ! When I went to India, India was the home of the Anglo-Indian. He perhaps came back to England once or, at the outside, twice in his career. He occasionally went for a change of air to South Africa, but India was to him for the greater part of his life his home and his country. Now,” said he, “ any man who has three months’ leave can get home to England any year, and he will make use of his opportunities to go to England. He will then, in all probability, marry the first pretty face he comes across, and he will take back with him to India a lady who will have no interest whatsoever in Indian native

life or in India generally. The extension and ramifications of the telegraph have terribly weakened individual authority and individual initiative. When I went to India, as soon as I had thoroughly mastered the vernaculars I was sent from Bombay up country, and there was not a European within forty miles of me. I had to govern and keep my district in order without European assistance, and in order to do so I had to make friends with the native gentlemen and the leading natives of the neighbourhood, and by them and through them I and many others of that date managed to keep order in our districts. Now you send a highly educated young man—no doubt much cleverer than I was—up country, but he goes with the telegraph wire in one hand and an elaborate book of regulations in the other to meet all difficulties and contingencies. If he makes a mess of it, which is not unlikely, he telegraphs to the Commissioner, who telegraphs to the Governor, and down comes a battalion of troops. Any fool could govern under those circumstances. Therefore, in my judgment, it is essential, if you want to reproduce the old class of administrator, that the white army should be largely reduced in India.”

He then said good-bye and left me pondering over his remarks.

The weaknesses in our present system of governing India which Sir George so vigorously denounced are apparent and indisputable, but was it, or could it be possible to govern upon his ideas? I doubt it. We do not nowadays get the men of his stamp for India ; and even if we

got them, they would soon lose, under the enervating influence of perpetual orders from headquarters and the permanent location of a military force close by, the magnetic instincts of autocratic rule based upon a belief and confidence in self. India for a long period was to Great Britain a land of adventure and romance, and the daring and adventurous spirits of those days were attracted to its service. The product of unlimited and competitive examination has many good qualities, but adventure, originality, and daring are not the attributes which this method of appointment was intended to generate or to test. So we must fall back and make the best use we can of the humdrum and mediocre methods which democracy imposes upon us.

CHAPTER XI

Lord-Lieutenancy of Ireland—Archbishop of Dublin—Lord Strathnairn—Rumours of Bulgarian atrocities—Disraeli's last day in Commons—Lord Lytton Viceroy of India—Visit to and dinner at Windsor Castle.

IN this year my father resigned the Lord-Lieutenancy of Ireland, which office in 1874 he had accepted for the second time. Both he and my mother found the climate of Dublin too enervating for a continuance of office. I had, therefore, two exceptional opportunities of judging and testing the advantages and disadvantages of maintaining this office, and it is hard to give an opinion one way or another.

My father's first tenure of office was greatly enjoyed by the younger members of his family. Three of my sisters and all my brothers were then unmarried. The novelty of our position and the general geniality of our surroundings made life very pleasant. We were the first Irish family for many years who had been at the Castle, and this fact made the whole difference as to our general reception. The smarter our equipages and general establishments were, the better pleased^d was Dublin: it showed what an Irishman could do. This undercurrent of a sense of affinity is stronger in Ireland than in any country I know, and it pervades, so far as the Viceroy and his family are concerned, both political friends

and opponents alike. In those days there were many pleasant country houses near Dublin both open and entertaining, and so we were surrounded by a very congenial circle. There was, further, the element of excitement in a Fenian rising which might have assumed dangerous proportions if it had not been promptly snuffed out.

Towards the close of the earlier tenure of office of my father, the Prince and Princess of Wales paid their first official visit to Ireland. It was a bold step, as the Fenian rising had only occurred a short time before; but the visit, which lasted nearly ten days, was a continuous triumph. The Prince by his charming manners and bonhomie, and the Princess by her beauty and simplicity, captured all hearts. "Sure, such a Princess was never seen save in a fairy-book!" exclaimed an enthusiastic admirer in fustian.

When we went back in 1874, my eldest brother and I and all my sisters save one were married. Our old friends had disappeared, in most of us the more serious side of life had become developed, and the artificiality of the semi-regal atmosphere in which we moved was much more apparent and much less endurable. In fact, the gilt was off the gingerbread, and, though we had many happy memories both of the Castle and the Viceregal Lodge, we were all glad to be free and to return to our more natural life.

The Lord-Lieutenancy of Ireland ought to be a post of such practical and political importance as to ensure its being filled by a man of first-rate ability and of high political standing; but this is just the class of public men who will not now

accept the post. It is very costly, and as communication between Dublin and London is accelerated, so is the position of the Lord-Lieutenant lowered and impaired, until he has become almost a powerless figurehead. The abolition of the office would be very unpopular in Dublin, for the Viceregal Court is a social centre of attraction to the provinces. But it is becoming more and more difficult to induce the proper man to accept a post entailing expense and little or no political initiative or power.

A great Anglo-Indian ruler on his return to England was congratulated by some of his friends upon India being so quiet. "Yes," he replied, "India is as quiet as a barrel of gunpowder." This is equally true of Ireland. An inept and partisan Lord-Lieutenant associated with a Chief Secretary with similar feelings are not unlikely between them to produce an explosion, and when that occurs the old feud between Red and Green will break out in its full intensity. Therefore, I think the balance of advantage would be in favour of the abolition of the Lord-Lieutenancy and the replacement by a Secretary of State, upon whom the direct responsibility for the administration of Ireland could be imposed, as is the case in Scotland.

At this period there were two remarkable men in Dublin—the Archbishop of Dublin, Dr. Trench,¹ and the Commander-in-Chief of the Forces, Lord Strathnairn.

The former was a great scholar, and had literary attainments of a very high order, both as a prose-writer and a poet; but he was the

most absent-minded man I ever saw, and with no sense of give and take. He was utterly out of his element in Dublin, and it was always to us a wonder why he exchanged the Deanery of Westminster—a post most congenial to his temperament and literary gifts—for an Archbishopric, where he was never at home or at ease.

His absent-mindedness culminated one evening in the following comical episode.

He was always fearful lest he should be attacked by paralysis, and one night at a big dinner-party he was sitting next my mother, who thought that he was behaving very oddly. Suddenly, in a tone of agony, he exclaimed: "It has come at last." "What has come?" asked my mother. "I am paralysed. I have been pinching my leg for the last ten minutes, and I cannot feel any sensation." "Excuse me, your Grace, but it is my leg that you have been pinching."

Lord Strathnairn was a very old and intimate friend of my father and mother, who had known him when he was simply Captain Rose, and he was quite one of our family circle. He was a very odd mixture—in society a dandy with a foolish manner, in action the bravest of the brave. We as boys regarded him as a combination of a joke and a hero. He made his reputation in India during the worst phases of the Mutiny by his celebrated march through Central India, where he achieved a series of astonishing successes against great odds and serious climatic difficulties. He had seven sunstrokes during this march, though none of them were severe enough to incapacitate him for long. The decision he showed

and the punishment he inflicted upon the highest rebels and malefactors established for ever his reputation as a fearless and stern soldier and administrator.

In society he was dreamy, inconsequent in his remarks, and foppish in his dress—the last individual you would associate with deeds of daring and fortitude. One day, in telling a long story to my wife, he ended by mixing up the two well-known adages in the following way : “ This was the last feather in the camel’s cap.”

In his latter years he used to give four dinners a season to old friends, each dinner consisting of eight. By inadvertence he asked the whole thirty-two on the same day. His house was a very small one in a corner of Berkeley Square ; but he was in no sense perturbed by the invasion. He sent over to Gunter’s, and in course of time a dinner was commenced all over the house—dining-room, drawing-room, hall, staircase, and landing, each contributing a share of the accommodation required. The entertainment was a great success.

An abortive Fenian rising occurred whilst Lord Strathnairn was in Ireland, which if it had not been promptly stamped out might have been dangerous. The loyalty of two regiments in Dublin had been seriously impaired. As soon as this was known to Strathnairn, the regiments without a moment’s delay were dispatched off to the West Indies. The rising occurred at Tallagh, a small village a few miles from Dublin. Lord Strathnairn rode there at once, and one of his aide-de-camps described to me the astonishing

change in his whole mien the moment serious work had to be done : all the drawing-room graces disappeared, and in the place of the dandy was a stern, watchful, determined soldier. His escort at Tallagh was small, and as it was the rendezvous for the Fenians who came there from all sides, in a short time the number of prisoners made were too large to be adequately guarded. The officer in charge asked for instructions. "Take all their braces and pocket-handkerchiefs from them, and split up their trousers behind and before," was the reply. It was a very cold night, and the ridicule excited next morning in Dublin when hundreds of pale and disordered men waddled through the muddy streets trying to hold up their trousers in front and behind put quite as much of an extinguisher upon the movement as the punishments inflicted upon its chief promoters.

Towards the close of the session, the rumours of wholesale Christian massacres in Bulgaria became more and more rife and established, but the information from our Ambassador at Constantinople, who was known to be somewhat of a Turcophile, did not sustain these allegations. He spoke of them as "coffee-house babble"—words which Disraeli repeated, and for which he was subsequently much attacked, it being asserted that he had himself invented the phrase to mislead the public.

Several debates on the subject occurred, in which Mr. Gladstone took part ; but on the last night of the session upon a formal proceeding William Harcourt delivered a powerful and

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carefully prepared speech, and to which Disraeli made an impromptu but successful reply.

This closed the session. I left the House by the door at the back of the Speaker's chair, and Disraeli was immediately behind me. There was something in the manner and tone of the Liberals—and especially of Sir William Harcourt—that made me feel sure that we should have a violent autumn agitation on these atrocities, and I said so to Disraeli. He replied: "I think Burke's answer and mine covered the ground, and we shall not have much further trouble on the subject."

Two days later he was gazetted Earl of Beaconsfield, and never again, except after a twenty-six hours' sitting, when he came to view the old scene of his successes, was he again seen in the House of Commons. He, however, told me more than once subsequently that if he had known Gladstone was going to resume the leadership of his party, he would not have left the House of Commons, but he was suffering from a chronic gouty asthma which late and long hours greatly aggravated. Moreover, he thought that Stafford Northcote and Gathorne Hardy in combination would be a full match for the Opposition leaders without Gladstone.

The moment the session was over the storm burst, and every party agency which the Radicals could command, plus Political Nonconformity and a certain section of High Churchmen who had a liking for the Greek Church, did their best to associate the Government personally with these atrocities, the extent and perpetration of

which were subsequently fully established. But the Eastern Question was then surrounded by conditions so different from those now existing that, in order to make clear the nature of the influences against which the Government then had to contend, I must give a separate chapter to this subject.

Towards the close of the year, Lord Northbrook, the Viceroy of India, resigned. He was a strong and able administrator, but he and Lord Salisbury were not sympathetic. Lord Northbrook was a thoroughbred Liberal, and had for many years been a prominent member of Liberal administrations, and his views upon the policy to be pursued in Central Asia and Afghanistan were too amorphous to suit the temperament of Lord Salisbury. Moreover, he had become involved in an awkward controversy as regards the duties upon cotton in India in which, more by accident than intention, he had through a piece of hasty legislation at Simla traversed, whilst on their way from England, some direct instructions sent to him.

He was succeeded by Lord Lytton, whose appointment was largely due to the fact that he was a rising diplomatist—full of ability and modern ideas, and therefore especially qualified to deal with the strained and unpleasant relations into which Calcutta and Cabul had drifted.

Towards the close of the year, Lord Salisbury left England for Constantinople to endeavour, if possible, to establish the Concert of the Great Powers of Europe, so as to secure a unanimous voice upon the solution of the latest phases of

Turkish misrule. This left me in charge of the India Office. The Queen was declared Empress of India on the 1st January 1878 at Delhi, and a great Durbar was held there in honour of the event. In the absence of Lord Salisbury, I received an invitation from Windsor to dine on that date with the Queen. I accompanied Disraeli to the Castle, and I found out it was due to him that I was thus exceptionally honoured.

At the time of the transfer of the Indian Government to the Crown in 1858, the Queen received magnificent presents of jewellery from almost all the reigning Princes of India. She came that night to dinner a mass of Oriental jewellery, mostly consisting of very large uncut stones and pearls, few of them perfect in shape or without some flaw in colour. Though effective as a blaze of colour, they did not suit Her Majesty, as they required a big and a dark woman to carry them effectively.

At dinner Disraeli asked the Queen if her ornaments comprised all the presents she had received in 1858, and she said: "Oh no; if you like I will have the rest brought in after dinner for you to see." So after dinner we had a series of small port-manteaux of jewels brought in, so large were some of the designs. But, to my taste, by far the handsomest of the gifts was a magnificent set of rubies from Nepal, cut and set in European fashion.

The Queen was very cordial, and gave me a large photograph of herself with her first signature of "R. & I." This I still have as a valued memento of my first interview with the Sovereign from whom in after life I received much kindness

and consideration. She told me to send a telegram to the Viceroy at Delhi stating that the only ornaments she wore on that eventful evening were presents from the native Princes of the Indian Empire.

CHAPTER XII

Eastern Question—Peter the Great's will—Rapid Russian advance—Trans-Siberian Railway—Occupation of Cabul in 1839—Lord Lawrence—Policy of "masterly inactivity"—Sir Bartle Frere—Shere Ali and Northbrook—Gladstone on the stump—Bulgarian atrocity agitation—Debates in Commons—Retirement of Lords Derby and Carnarvon—Knightsbridge banquet—Lytton's policy in India—Yacoob Khan—Guarantees to Abdul Rahman.

As a very young Member of Parliament, I in my ignorance once asked an old Member: "What is this Eastern Question? And why are we, the most Western power of Europe, so interested in it?" His reply was: "Did you ever hear of the Crimean War? That was its last warlike phase, and we may at any moment become involved in an even more serious war with Russia on the same subject." This made me realise that the Crimean War occurred little more than twenty years ago. I therefore determined, to the best of my ability, to try and master the details and underlying currents of the subject so perilously connected with the prospect of a great and exhausting war.

Our interest in the Eastern Question has its origin in our Empire in India. There is a reported will of Peter the Great of Russia which lays down as a cardinal principle of the future national policy of Russia the acquisition of India by marching through Central Asia, Persia, and Afghanistan.

Whether this will ever existed is doubtful; but Russian expansionists have exploited the idea and flourished it in the face of Great Britain. Between 1860 and 1870 Russia established herself on the eastern side of the Caspian Sea at Krasnovodst, and her subsequent steady and continuous advance through Central Asia did alarm men of stable judgment who knew Persia and the adjacent districts. Sir Henry Rawlinson, a great Oriental scholar and authority upon Persian questions, constituted himself the mouthpiece of this section of public opinion. He was strongly of opinion that the increase of Russian influence in Persia and her continual advance through the country adjacent to the north of Afghanistan would, in course of time, seriously undermine our authority and rule in India. Merv, an isolated place located in a desert, was supposed to command Herat, and Herat was popularly said to be the key to India.

Prince Gortshakoff was the Russian Chancellor, and the undertakings and understandings periodically arranged with him were not always adhered to; at any rate, such was the view of our foreign and Indian political officers. Merv was elevated into a place of capital importance—so much so that the Duke of Argyll chaffed certain politicians as permanently suffering from merveshness. The three Khanates of Khiva, Bokhara, and Samarkand were annexed by Russia, and became, for all practical purposes, Russian territory. These annexations were in some cases mercilessly accomplished, of which the massacre of the Turcomans by General Scoboleff was a striking example.

Nearer Europe Georgia and the Caucasus had

previously undergone the same fate. Afghanistan thus became the only quasi-independent place between India and Russian territory. Afghanistan was, on account of its peculiar geographical and physical connection with India, admitted by Russia to be outside the sphere of her influence and within the legitimate zone of British authority.

This vast and constant advance of Russia towards India on the one hand, and towards Constantinople on the other, caused a not unnatural prejudice and suspicion as to what her ulterior purposes really were. Was her object the improvement of the government and condition of the people in provinces abutting upon her own territory? If so, why did she not first improve her own admittedly faulty administration? Moreover, I think it could be shown historically that she was more concerned to absorb the territory of her neighbours than to help them to reform their system of administration. The repudiation of the Turkish Debt and the massacres in Bulgaria, to some extent, illustrate this proposition.

Count Ignatieff was at that time Russian Ambassador in Constantinople. He was a very able and not over-scrupulous advocate of this forward policy. It was asserted at the time—and I believe with some truth—that he had a good deal to do with some misdeeds of the Ottoman Government. He did not disapprove of the repudiation of the Turkish Debt, and he suggested the withdrawal of the regular Turkish Army from Bulgaria, and then when an abortive rising was there made, the Pomaks of Circassian origin—a

kind of Bashi Bazouk located in Bulgaria—were at once let loose upon the districts which were supposed to have risen, and terrible widespread outrages were committed.

Constantinople, the old Roum, the centre of authority and prestige of the old Eastern Empire, was believed to be the object of Russian ambition, and with its occupation Russian prestige and material power would have been so enhanced as to have made her the arbiter of those parts of Asia and Europe which were contained in Alexander the Great's Empire.

Behind these suspicions was the further fear that an outbreak of racial trouble in south-east Europe, unless it were localised and contracted by the Great Powers of Europe, would precipitate a war in which the Great Powers would find themselves involved. The awful and gigantic war in which we are now engaged arises from the antagonism between Slav and Teuton. Thirty years ago the racial feud was entirely between Slav and Turk. It is necessary to recapitulate these conditions, for it was with them that we had to deal when the Eastern Question arose in 1876. The more prominent of these conditions have passed away, or at any rate have ceased to operate. The Trans-Siberian Railway and the enormous wealth which the territories thus opened out can produce have vitally changed the ambition and policy of Russia in Asia. No longer is there any talk of Peter the Great's will, or of an attempt to utilise Afghanistan to India's disadvantage. In Persia—long the seat of contention between Russian and British influence—a convenient arrangement has

been arrived at which safeguards India's western frontier and gives legitimate scope elsewhere to Russian influence.

That part of the Eastern Question which personally concerned me the most as the representative of the India Office was the relations existing at this time between Shere Ali, the Ameer of Afghanistan, and the Indian Government. That they were most unsatisfactory, all were compelled to admit. There were two schools of thought, each headed by a distinguished Anglo-Indian statesman, which had distinctive but antagonistic policies for the relief of the existing tension. Many years ago, under the viceroyalty of Lord Auckland, a vigorous interference in the internal affairs of Afghanistan was made by an attempt to oust Dost Mahomed, the *de facto* Ameer, in favour of his rival, Shah Shuja. An army of British and native troops was sent up to Cabul for that purpose, and apparently a complete success was achieved. Shah Shuja was placed upon the throne, and the English forces were comfortably cantoned around Cabul. A very sudden and treacherous outbreak occurred. Our troops were mishandled, and ultimately the whole of our expeditionary force was cut off and exterminated. To wipe out this defeat, a fresh army was sent up to Cabul. It totally defeated the Afghans and brought away certain Englishwomen who were in captivity, and, returning over the frontier, it left Dost Mahomed in undisputed possession of the throne of Cabul. He died some years later on, and was succeeded by his son, Shere Ali. His succession was disputed, and for

some time with success, by a rival Afghan candidate.

The collapse of Lord Auckland's ill-advised interference in the internal affairs of Afghanistan made a great impression upon the next generation of Anglo-Indian officials. A policy of non-interference, or of "masterly inactivity," was strongly advocated by the Punjab officials, of whom the most distinguished was Lord Lawrence. In the interval between the expedition of Lord Auckland and the viceroyalty of Lord Lawrence, the Punjab had been annexed by the Indian Government, and became the frontier province bordering upon Afghanistan.

Lord Lawrence was for some years the head of the Punjab Government. He held strongly that we ought not to put a man or a horse anywhere over our frontier, either into Afghanistan or the districts south of it, namely, Baluchistan. He knew Afghanistan to be a very difficult country, the tribes to be cruel and treacherous by nature but intensely proud of their independence. Moreover, their institutions were democratic. They were governed by a kind of parliament in which there was always an opposition, and it was therefore almost impossible to make permanent arrangements or treaties with them, and his policy may be summed up in these words :

"The more you leave them alone, the less they will dislike you. If they raid our territory, then have recourse to punitive expeditions which, after having done all the mischief they can, should at once return to our territory."

This policy was pursued for many years ; but

it had within it one serious flaw. It was necessary to have dealings with whomsoever was in power at Cabul, but, in order to carry out complete abstinence from any kind of internal interference, the Chief whom the British Government were obliged to recognise was not the *de jure* ruler, but the *de facto* possessor of Cabul. This undignified method of recognition encouraged usurpations. As soon as the usurper obtained a temporary success, and got to Cabul, he became recognised by the great Indian Raj as a legitimate ruler.

A successful rising against Shere Ali resulted in the usurper being recognised by the Indian Government, and although this usurper was subsequently dethroned by the military skill which Shere Ali's eldest son, Yacoob Khan, developed, Shere Ali never forgot the indignity which the Indian Government thus placed upon him.

The extreme western provinces of the Indian Government were the Punjab and Scinde. Punjab abutted upon Afghanistan, Scinde upon Baluchistan. The Baluchis and their country were very different from Afghanistan. They were governed by hereditary chiefs who recognised the Khan of Kelat as the head of their confederacy ; they were ready to make treaties and to keep them ; they were not fanatical ; they liked the British officers and were very amenable to their influence and advice. The Scinde frontier officials took an opposite view from that held by the Punjabis. They urged an advance all over the frontier, and the establishment of a nominal suzerainty over Baluchistan as agreeable to the natives and productive of permanent peace and progress. At the

head of this school was Sir Bartle Frere, with a reputation not inferior to that of Lord Lawrence. Each of these distinguished men was right so far as his personal acquaintance with the frontier was concerned ; but each was wrong when he attempted to apply his policy to the whole length of the frontier, and especially to that part of it of which he had no actual personal knowledge.

Afghanistan so dominated, geographically, Upper India, and contained so large a number of free-booting and fighting tribes, that permanently bad relations with its ruler gave him an exceptional opportunity of annoyance and disturbance to India. If the ruler passed away from our influence and got under the control of Russia, in the state of conditions existing in 1876, an intolerable situation would have been created, which could only have been terminated by war with Russia.

Lord Mayo during his viceroyalty met Shere Ali at Peshawar. The Viceroy's imposing presence, geniality, and charm made a great impression upon his Afghan guest ; but there was one request put to him with which he could not comply. Shere Ali's pet son, Abdulla Jan, was a boy, his elder brother, Yacoob Khan—who had by his military prowess regained the throne for his father—being in disgrace and in rigid confinement. Shere Ali pressed for the recognition of the boy as his successor. This Lord Mayo declined to do, but he gave Shere Ali both men and arms and sent him away fairly well satisfied.

During Lord Northbrook's viceroyalty the advance of Russia towards Afghanistan became

marked, and the territories which she annexed were in close proximity to the Afghan frontier. Shere Ali, becoming alarmed, sent a message to the Viceroy asking for some kind of guarantee from the British Government against Russian aggression. Shere Ali was at that time in a bad temper, as Lord Northbrook had given him a friendly warning that he must treat his son, Yacoob Khan, whom he kept in prison, with more consideration. It was always reported that Lord Northbrook was himself prepared to give a conditional guarantee to Shere Ali against Russian aggression; but a thoroughly Gladstonian telegram from London, directing him "to inform Shere Ali that His Majesty's Government did not share his alarm and thought that there was no cause for it," prevented him from giving effect to such intentions. Shere Ali became permanently alienated, and not unnaturally turned his eyes towards Russia.

Lord Lytton's arrival in India was coincident with the revival of the Eastern Question in its most acute form in Europe, with the practical establishment of Russian authority right up to the north of Afghanistan, and with the estrangement of the ruler of that country from the Indian Government.

The dispatch of Lord Salisbury in 1876 to Constantinople as representative of Great Britain at the conference of the Great Powers produced no result. The conference failed to induce Turkey to accept certain changes under which the principles of self-government and autonomy would have been extended to the Christian provinces

in European Turkey. Russia, in consequence of the failure of the conference, shortly afterwards declared war on Turkey.

In the meantime, the agitation against the Government continued unabated, and in many cases degenerated into the most extravagant abuse of Disraeli and the grossest misrepresentation of the aims and objects of his government. Foremost amongst this class of speaker was to be found Gladstone, who not only broke all the traditions and circumspection which had hitherto regulated an ex-Premier's public utterances, but went so far, when travelling, as to make the big railway stations through which he passed platforms for his party diatribes.

Early in 1876, Sir Louis Mallet, with whom I had established a close intimacy, came one day into my room and said: "I have news of your friend Mr. Gladstone." "What is it?" I said. He replied: "A great friend of mine and a first-rate judge of men and affairs has just come back from Hawarden. He says Gladstone is in a most restless frame of mind—so much so, that if he gets the opportunity he will become the great demagogue of the century." Within a few months of this utterance this prediction was verified.

As no Cabinet Minister would go this year to the Cutlers' Feast at Sheffield, I was sent to represent the Government. It was the first ministerial speech made since the session. I was able, whilst denouncing vigorously the perpetrators of the atrocities in Bulgaria, to prove the extravagance and injustice of the charge

made against the Government, and to point out that the perpetrators of these political atrocities in England were more concerned to murder the reputation of the Prime Minister than to obtain a peaceable and sound settlement of the Eastern Question. My audience was greatly pleased, and in consequence I received so many invitations in the North that I became one of the leading speakers for the Government. This brought me in constant collision with Gladstone, for though I knew it was ridiculous for me to put myself in competition with so great an orator, yet by dint of a good memory and a careful study of Gladstone's past and present speeches I was constantly able to show up at public meetings the unfairness, extravagance, and contradictions of his present language as an agitator when contrasted with his past attitude as a Minister.

Gladstone was now surrounded by a group of wild Slavophiles and High Church clergy, for whom no statement was too absurd or extravagant. As an illustration of the kind of allegation made, Canons Liddon and M'Coll, when travelling down the Danube, declared that the Turks, to show their contempt and hatred for Christianity, had at stated intervals crucified Christians on their side of the river. Subsequent inquiry proved that what they had seen were not impaled Christians but the upright and cross stakes upon which the fishermen of the Danube put and kept their nets.

When Parliament met, Mr. Chaplin, in a speech of great ability and pitched in the tone of a thorough gentleman, told Gladstone that he was

bound "as a man of honour" to make good or withdraw his accusations against the Government. The latter bounded up and, in one of those melodramatic attitudes which he could always assume at any moment, immediately posed as an upright old man against whom an offensive charge had been hurled by a youthful swashbuckler. A noisy row ensued, in which the Speaker ultimately ruled that the words used exceeded the limits of Parliamentary debate—to my mind, a ridiculous ruling, unless it be held that it is permissible in Parliamentary life to do publicly that which is not tolerated in private life. However, the challenge had its effect.

Gladstone then formulated his policy in six resolutions. They were worded with his characteristic ambiguity, but one did seem to amount to an undertaking to join Russia in the war she had just declared against Turkey. Thereupon a revolt commenced in the Radical ranks. The previous question—always the refuge of the wavering—was moved as an amendment by a prominent Liberal, and a long and animated discussion took place upon the procedure. Ultimately, Gladstone withdrew three of his resolutions. Never did he exhibit to greater perfection his marvellous powers of speech than on this occasion. On the question of procedure he spoke often and at great length, and he did not get up to speak on the main question till past seven o'clock. Yet, in spite of these disadvantages, for three hours he made a speech of the most sustained eloquence I ever heard. In one passage where

he described the Bulgarians as "cowering more and more under their brutal misgovernment," his histrionic faculty so asserted itself that he almost disappeared behind the box in illustration of a cowering attitude. But behind this splendour of speech there was no practical alternative policy to that of the Government, except war with Turkey, Russia being our ally, and he was defeated by a majority of 130, a figure far in excess of the normal numbers of the Government. This debate and division placed the Government, right up to the period of the Berlin Conference, in a position of undisputed dominance during the continuance of the Eastern trouble in Europe.

In a subsequent debate, Gladstone gave a very amusing instance of his extraordinary quickness and unfairness in debate. Whilst he was speaking, someone interrupted him on the ministerial side. He thought that it was Lord Barrington who so interrupted. Lord Barrington was sitting in an immaculate costume on the Treasury Bench, so he turned on him and said: "What does the noble lord know of this question? Has he given it the full bent of his intelligent mind so as to justify him in thus interrupting me?"—and a good deal more of the same kind of language. At last poor Barrington got up and said: "I beg the right hon. gentleman's pardon—I never opened my mouth." Instead of apologising, Gladstone replied: "Then why does the noble lord appropriate to himself my observations?"

The Russian operations against Turkey were not, in the earlier stages of the war, successful, and so serious were the repulses they received

before Plevna that they were forced to supersede the Grand Dukes from their command of the Russian army and bring in a veteran of the Crimean War, General Todleben. They were further compelled to invoke the co-operation of the Roumanian army. These rearrangements turned the tide of war in Russia's favour. They crossed the Balkans and came within measurable distance of Constantinople. A Vote of Credit and the dispatch of our Fleet up the Dardanelles followed as a counter-stroke.

During the Easter recess Indian troops were brought up to Malta. These combined movements greatly irritated the Radicals, and loud were the denunciations of the impropriety, cowardice, and unconstitutionality of those bringing an Eastern army into the operations of a European war.

Great is the irony of events, for a generation later the political descendants of Disraeli's assailants bring a far larger force of Indian troops to operate in France, and for so doing pose before the world as Imperial statesmen of the first order.

Lords Derby and Carnarvon then seceded from the Government. The former, though possessing a singularly clear intellect, was no man of action; the latter was, and in leaving the Government bequeathed to it a serious legacy in South Africa. The annexation of the Transvaal and the war with the Zulus were the consequences of the forward policy he had initiated, and over which, up to the date of retirement, he had exercised almost exclusive control.

The Treaty of San Stefano and the conference

under the presidency of Prince Bismarck at Berlin were the next development of the Eastern Question.

At that Conference Beaconsfield was a leading figure, and Prince Bismarck—at first disposed to regard him contemptuously—took such a liking for him that he afterwards had his photograph in his room, and told more than one individual that he was the ablest statesman he had ever met.

The arrangements made by this Conference met with general approval, and Disraeli's description of them as "peace with honour" satisfied all but unreasonable partisans.

A great banquet was given at the Knightsbridge Barracks to the English plenipotentiaries, and the then Duke of Buccleuch was in the chair. Almost immediately afterwards Gladstone announced his intention of contesting the seat of Midlothian held by Lord Dalkeith, the Duke's eldest son. Gladstone had more than once publicly said that there was no body of men to whom the British public were more indebted than those members of the Tory Party who, by adhering to Sir Robert Peel, enabled him to repeal the Corn Laws. He showed his gratitude by selecting as his special political antagonist at the next election the eldest son of the only surviving colleague, except himself, of Sir Robert Peel.

I now turn to the consequences, upon the Indian side, of Russia's forward action in Central Asia.

Lord Lytton was a special friend of Lord

Beaconsfield. He had much in common with him, and as the controversy over Lord Beaconsfield's policy became more active and embittered, upon Lord Lytton's shoulders fell much abuse and misrepresentation. It was a common allegation of Radical speakers that he was specially instructed to create a quarrel and war with Afghanistan, and that he deliberately and with intent executed this instruction. I knew him intimately and was in close correspondence with him during the whole of his viceroyalty. I can truly say that he did his best to attain his ends peaceably, but was foiled in this attempt by the conditions brought into existence through the ineptitude and want of foresight of his predecessors and political assailants. Almost his first act in India was to establish a protectorate over Baluchistan, and he sent a small force to Quetta. This forward move was bitterly denounced by Lord Lawrence and the "masterly inactivity" party. All their predictions were and have been utterly falsified. The Baluchis have never given us any trouble, the whole country has prospered and advanced under our protectorate, and the possession of Quetta as a great military station and sanatorium has been of the greatest use in dealing with and settling awkward Persian questions and protecting that side of India from untoward influences and advance.

His next step was to try and induce the Ameer to receive a deputation at Cabul to discuss outstanding questions between India and Afghanistan. As a preliminary, he nominated Sir Lewis Pelly as his representative to meet Shere Ali's repre-

sentative at Peshawar. I have always been doubtful if his choice was a happy one. Sir Lewis had undoubted capacity, but it was more in the sphere of action than diplomacy.

The Peshawar Conference came to nothing. Shortly afterwards the Ameer received a Russian embassy at Cabul. This reception was contrary to the whole understanding governing the relations of Russia and Great Britain in Central Asia, and its effect was necessarily far-reaching. Afghanistan has been admitted by both parties to be outside Russian influence and within the sphere of British influence. Up to that date all negotiations with Russia and with the rulers of Cabul had been carried on upon that assumption. Shere Ali's conduct gave us a legitimate *casus belli* against him, but Lord Lytton did not take that course. He strove to solve peaceably the tangle thus created by asking Shere Ali to receive a mission, at the head of which he placed one of the most distinguished Anglo-Indian officials, Sir Neville Chamberlain. Shere Ali refused to receive the mission and stopped its advance by force.

Lord Lytton was thus compelled to have recourse to force, and in a series of masterly manœuvres, in which Lord Roberts established his reputation as a strategist, the Afghans were totally defeated and Cabul occupied. Shere Ali fled and died shortly afterwards. Lord Lytton then selected Yacoob Khan, Shere Ali's eldest son, who for a long time had been imprisoned under his father's displeasure, as his successor, and with the approval of the Afghan tribal chiefs placed him on the throne at Cabul. Sir Louis Cavagnari,

a well-known frontier official, was located as resident in Cabul, and the British force vacated Afghanistan.

The choice of Yacoob Khan proved subsequently to be a mistake. His long term of imprisonment had impaired both his mind and physique, and he was induced by some fanatics to foster an outbreak against Sir Louis, in which soldiers of the Afghan army participated. All the members of the mission were murdered, the British Army was forced to reoccupy Cabul, and later on Lord Roberts made his celebrated march from Cabul to Kandahar for the relief of the garrison which was then surrounded by a large Afghan army. The total rout of that force placed Afghanistan at the mercy of the Indian Government.

Shere Ali's family being impossible, the Government in 1880 (Mr. Gladstone then being Prime Minister) found another claimant to the throne in Abdul Rahman, at that time a refugee at Tashkend. A subsidy and guarantees were given to him far in excess of what Shere Ali wanted. The arrangements then made have, on the whole, worked well, though all officials behind the scenes know well the difficulty of making any conditions work smoothly between two contracting parties so wholly different in ideas and action as the Governments of Calcutta and Cabul.

The cause of the war of 1878-1880 was not due to Lord Lytton but to those who, through short-sightedness and obstinacy, created the impossible conditions with which he had to contend.

This was the argument which Stanhope (who succeeded me as Under-Secretary of State for India) and I continuously put forward in the House of Commons between 1878 and 1880, and we were able to traverse and destroy the whole premises of Gladstone's attack, notwithstanding his subtlety and powers of speech. "Masterly inactivity" may, in certain phases of the development of a difficult question, be wise, especially when opponents are by their own action increasing and aggravating their initial difficulties. But when success attends the action of your opponents, to sit still and allow them to pile up advantage upon advantage for themselves is self-evidently a wrong attitude. No better illustration can be found of the limitations which a policy of "masterly inactivity" imposes upon itself than a review of our relations with Afghanistan from 1860 to 1880.

CHAPTER XIII

Northcote as Leader—Gathorne Hardy—Disraeli's retirement much felt—Development of obstruction—Chamberlain—Railways *versus* Irrigation—Indian Budget—Success in conciliating Gladstone.

THE elimination of the Eastern Question with which I have dealt makes the record of the proceedings of Parliament for the next three years somewhat prosaic. On Disraeli's departure to the House of Lords, Sir Stafford Northcote became the leader of the Ministry in the Commons. As second under Disraeli, he was admirable—adroit, knowledgeable, and ready. On the defensive side he was always excellent, but he had no combative instincts, and was overshadowed by Gladstone, whose Private Secretary he had been, in almost everything except finance. I once remember Mr. Gladstone elaborating on the various methods by which indebtedness could be reduced or paid off. Northcote in reply said that, though he had listened with interest to the right hon. gentleman's explanation of the multi-fold methods by which debt could be reduced, he must point out that there was only one way of achieving that object, and that was by living within your income.

Gathorne Hardy was much better qualified for the leadership. He was a born fighter, gifted

with a ready flow of speech which often became eloquence. He was an excellent administrator, believed perfectly in his political creed, and was absolutely reliable. On the other hand, he was impetuous and somewhat lazy about details and the management of the tiresome units of the party. In after years, Lord Beaconsfield admitted that he had made a mistake in putting Northcote over Hardy, but he had never contemplated Gladstone's permanent return to politics.

Gathorne Hardy did not long remain in the Commons, as with the title of Viscount Cranbrook he went up to the House of Lords. I have always had a strong suspicion as to the reason of his sudden departure. Sir George Trevelyan, in a singularly offensive speech made in Scotland, insinuated that the Ministerial Party had a personal interest in promoting war, as it was only during war that they could get their incompetent relations commissions in the Army and Navy. This speech excited, as might be expected, great indignation on our side, and Gathorne Hardy one night challenged Sir George Trevelyan to make good his assertion or to let it go into that "category of statements which it was not parliamentary to mention." This produced a great uproar, but Gathorne Hardy stuck to his guns. Northcote, in a subsequent speech, practically threw him over by an explanation. A few days later Gathorne Hardy was gazetted a peer.

Northcote was always exceptionally courteous to the subordinate members of his Government, especially those representing big departments.

He was an excellent man of business, and he had a good general knowledge of the working of large offices. He was ever ready to come to the assistance of his colleagues if they were hard pressed in debate, and he was dexterous and conciliatory. He never could fill the gap made by Disraeli's elevation to the Lords, nor could anyone exercise upon antagonists the same influence and deterrent control which was effected by the mere presence of Disraeli on the Treasury Bench. Disraeli was nearly always in the House, and he listened most attentively to the Under-Secretaries doing their work, and if you glided successfully over thin ice or counteracted a difficult attack, a quiet "Hear, hear" used to fall from his lips—a great encouragement to a young official. Gladstone once described him as the "greatest master of Parliamentary sarcasm and irony for the past two centuries," and the knowledge that at any moment, if provoked, he might have recourse to his armoury of inimitable satire kept many turbulent and self-advertising spirits quiet. Few people like being made to look ridiculous, especially if the ridicule becomes permanently plastered on their persons. Disraeli's extraordinary perception of human character made his phrases sting, because, though they might be exaggerated, they were largely founded on what was seen to be truth. His description of Gladstone as coming down to the House "with a countenance arranged for the occasion," of Horsman as "a very superior person," of Beresford Hope as the "exponent of Batavian grace," all clung to their victims, because whenever you looked at them Disraeli's

epigram came back to you as being truly descriptive.

Obstruction was beginning seriously to develop itself just when Disraeli left the House of Commons. I have often wondered, if Disraeli had had to cope with it, whether his ironical power would not have kept the Irish in order, as they love epigrammatic smartness and hate being laughed at. Disraeli, as Leader of the House of Commons, stopped to an extraordinary extent silly and nonsensical talk, for no one cared to have his defects and shortcomings publicly advertised, and this was what Disraeli's unerring instinct enabled him to achieve.

The fact of his rival's retirement had a curious effect upon Gladstone. So long as the former was in the House, the latter never attempted a joke or humour. As soon as he was gone, he blossomed out, if not as a humorist, at least as one who could not only understand a joke but occasionally make one.

Our Treasury Bench now became very weak in debating power. We had lost Ward Hunt in the preceding year. He was a first-class debater and full of courage. He was one of the biggest men I ever saw, weighing over 26 stone, and he ate proportionately to his size. Our Front Bench now consisted of Stafford Northcote, Cross, Smith and Stanley, John Manners and Michael Hicks Beach; but, with the exception of Northcote and Beach, none of them were in the first rank of Parliamentary debaters.

The Opposition had heavier guns in the persons of Gladstone, Lowe, Lord Hartington, and

Sir William Harcourt ; but our men stuck gallantly to us, and though we were worried and kept many nights out of bed, our majority rarely failed us.

Mr. Joseph Chamberlain about this time entered the House of Commons. He at once made his mark. His close reasoning power, his command of language and illustration, and his delightful voice, all indicated Parliamentary power of an exceptional quality. His imperious mind expressed itself very early in debate, for Lord Hartington having taken a line not congenial to the extreme Radicals, Chamberlain began a speech in reply by alluding to him as "the late Leader of the Liberal Party."

In the winter of 1876 there was a very widespread failure of rain in India and every prospect of distress and shortage of work. In connection with this drought, Mr. Bright signalised himself by making in elaborate speeches a violent attack upon the Indian Government for building railroads : "Irrigation, not railroads" was what India required. This curious outbreak was largely due to a well-known engineer, Sir Arthur Cotton, who was so elated at certain successes he had achieved in districts specially suitable for irrigation that he had irrigation on the brain, and he communicated his wild ideas to Mr. Bright. The latter took the matter up, because he thought railroads might be built for strategical purposes, whereas irrigation works could not be utilised for military transport. Bright spoke so extraordinarily well that any propositions he put forward were sure to enlist considerable sympathy

and support, not only in the Press but in Parliament.

The Indian Government were so certain of their case that I was directed to move for a Select Committee to inquire into the matter. Bright declined to serve, but I persuaded Childers to undertake the chairmanship of the Committee. The Report was a triumphant vindication of the policy of building railroads, and it is largely due to the railway system so established, all of which is or will be the property of the Government, that Indian finance is now so strong and stable.

This incident illustrates Bright's weakness as a statesman. He was the slave of his early and local environment. As a Quaker, he hated war. During the great French war the price of food rose, and the rents of the aristocracy and landed proprietors rose also. "Therefore," argued Bright, "the aristocracy are generally in favour of war, as it improves their incomes. A railway, as it could be utilised in time of war, might encourage war. Let us stop war in India by ceasing to build railways." But, with all his prejudice, he was a real big man: his simple and massive eloquence was extraordinarily impressive. He largely relied upon monosyllabic words. A celebrated passage in one of his speeches on a Burials Bill began: "Take the case of one of my own sect——" When Home Rule became a Liberal cry, he opposed it, believing it to be a fatal blow at our national integrity, and he resolutely broke with old friends, party connections, and traditions rather than assent to what

he believed to be ruinous to his country. Peace be to his ashes !

The resignations of Lord Derby and Lord Carnarvon early in 1878 forced Lord Beaconsfield to recast his Government. Lord Salisbury replaced Lord Derby at the Foreign Office, and Sir Michael Hicks Beach Lord Carnarvon at the Colonial Office. Partly to keep the Stanley influence in the north of England, and partly because he was in himself an excellent official, Colonel Stanley, Lord Derby's brother, went to the War Office, and Gathorne Hardy filled Lord Salisbury's vacancy at the India Office, and a few weeks later I was appointed to the post of Vice-President of the Council, which I accepted, as it was supposed to be political promotion.

Sir John Strachey was now Finance Minister in India, and his Budget for this year was the foundation of a thorough and masterly reform of Indian taxation. He placed the Salt Tax upon a proper basis by equalising its incidence throughout India and abolishing that relic of barbarism, the Salt Hedge. He also readjusted taxation with a view to encouraging the production of certain raw material which India can supply in unlimited quantities. This Budget was the subject of a hostile notice by Fawcett, who then occupied the post of Leader of the Opposition in the House of Commons upon Indian questions. I further had information that he had enlisted Gladstone's support on behalf of his motion. These two had been working together on the Eastern Question, and I felt sure that Gladstone's participation in the debate would be more due

to this co-operation than to a real disapproval of the proposed financial changes.

I had just been transferred to the Education Office, but as no one except myself knew the past history of the taxation affected or the details of the Budget, I was told that I must speak for the Government. To have Gladstone on the top of one on controversial points of finance was not a pleasant prospect. Moreover, I was afraid that if he once undertook the rôle of a hostile critic on Indian finance his influence, knowledge, and reputation would make the position of the representative of the India Office in the House of Commons unpleasant if not untenable. Could I then frame a case which would induce him to drop his intended speech? It suddenly occurred to me that the abolition of the Salt Hedge in India might be compared to the repeal of the Corn Laws in 1846 in this country, and the proposed new taxation to the laws by which Sir Robert Peel proposed to make good the loss thus created. I found that the analogy held good on various points, so I prepared with the utmost care a speech in which I drew a comparison between Strachey and Peel, eulogising those who enabled Peel to carry out his fiscal policy, and in doing so implied that Gladstone was not the least of these national benefactors. I further enlarged upon the benefits which accrued to the working-classes of Great Britain from the realisation of this policy, and I then asked—was it fair that the House of Commons, which had carried out these changes in England, should decline to allow India to participate in the benefits of a like policy?

I was not confident when I got up to speak. Gladstone was sitting opposite to me, preparing to take notes and closely following every word I uttered, and I knew that I should be annihilated if I made a slip. When I got to the comparison, he stopped taking notes. I went on elaborating my case; he listened more intently. A few minutes later he tore up his notes, and as I sat down he got up and walked to where Fawcett sat, said something to him, and went out of the House. He did not take part in the division.

Next day Sir Henry Maine, who, throughout my official connection with him, was always most encouraging, came into my room and said: "I hear you achieved a triumph last night." And I said: "What was it?" "Your speech had such an effect on Gladstone that he went up to Fawcett and said, 'George Hamilton has made such a good case for the changes that I cannot speak against them.'"

I left the India Office with sincere regret. The work, though heavy, was congenial, and my relations with the Council and the staff were more than friendly. In those days debates in the House of Commons upon Indian questions were far more frequent than they are now, and what with Select Committees and discussions I had as much, if not more, Parliamentary work than any of my colleagues of the same standing.

CHAPTER XIV

Vice-President of Council—Difference with Lord President—
Beaconsfield's solution of difficulty—Dinner at Lord Arthur
; Russell's—Froude—Origin of payment by results in educa-
tion—Apology from Commons to Beaconsfield.

MY new post was officially designated: "The Vice-President of the Committee of Council upon Education"—a title which was a nondescript evolution of an antiquated but originally very powerful department. In old days the Privy Council might be almost described as the Home Government of the country. The Lord President of that Department was an executive and administrative official of the highest importance. He had jurisdiction over the Colonies, all trade and agricultural questions, and many other branches of administration, and he dealt with all these subjects by Orders in Council. Century by century his powers became curtailed, and the greater proportion of the powers and duties which he performed was transferred to freshly created Secretaries of State and to the new departments which came into existence, such as the Board of Trade, Local Government Board, and the Agricultural Board. Education had not, however, been wholly separated from this office, though its officials were in a separate department under the control of the Vice-President. The Lord President,

therefore, as Chief of the whole Office, was technically and legally head of the Education Board, but in practice the Vice-President, both in Parliament and in the country, was regarded as Education Minister and was held responsible for all the Education Department might do or fail to do.

In my address I had somewhat rashly described myself as "Minister for Education," and rumours reached me that the Lord President of the Council resented the appellation that I had given to myself. A few days later I received a request from Lord Beaconsfield to come and see him, and when I went into the room I saw lying on the table beside him a book containing the Orders in Council and the Educational Statute; so I knew at once what was the matter upon which he wished to speak to me.

He told me that I had given myself a position which I was not entitled to claim. I tried to argue the point with him, but he said: "I have looked in the Orders in Council and the Act of Parliament, and you have not a leg to stand on." I pointed out to him that it was no promotion if I had to be in a position of an Under-Secretary to the Lord President, who certainly was, in ability and standing, inferior to my late Chief, Lord Salisbury. That he admitted, but said: "Your relative positions are somewhat anomalous. You are a man of the world. The Lord President, though punctilious, is a high-minded and upright gentleman, and you must get on with him as best you can." This I undertook to do, but I pointed out that, as I had ideas of my own and the House of Commons was very exacting upon certain

points of educational policy, it really was essential that I should have a free hand in dealing with the class of question that mainly concerned the House of Commons. To that he agreed, and he added : " Now, I rely upon your carrying on your work without friction ; but if you have any real trouble, come to me."

I got on very well with the Lord President, who, though tenacious of his dignity and position, had a kind and just mind behind a somewhat tart manner. But early in 1880 a serious difficulty occurred between us. The Secretary of the Education Department was Sir Francis Sandford, an official of exceptional resource and tactfulness. The Chancellor of the Exchequer was very hard up, as a disastrous harvest and depression of trade had so curtailed the natural growth of his revenue as to make it difficult for him to meet the expenditure of the prospective year on existing taxation. I therefore, with the assistance of Sir Francis Sandford, cut my estimates down to the lowest point compatible with efficiency, and I sent them on to the Treasury.

A few days afterwards, Sir Francis Sandford wrote to me telling me that after a meeting of the Cabinet the Chancellor of the Exchequer had taken the Lord President on one side and told him the reductions were not enough, and they proceeded to play hanky-panky with my estimates by reducing just those parts of them which it was most impolitic to touch, and amongst other reductions they largely curtailed the grant on reading, writing, and arithmetic. A general election was impending, and this curtailment of the

grant would not only have been very detrimental to education, but would have produced a political uproar throughout the country, as the Church schools mainly relied upon this part of the grant for their maintenance.

As soon as I came to London, I went to the Lord President and put before him this side of the question. He was rather taken aback, but as he considered himself pledged to the Chancellor of the Exchequer he declined to give way. I was thus placed in an awkward position. Personally, I should have been held responsible, both in Parliament and in the constituency, for these maladroit reductions; on the other hand, to resign would have embarrassed the Government, which was, from various causes, losing its hold on public opinion. I then remembered Lord Beaconsfield's promise. I went to him and described exactly what had occurred. He listened intently, and after a minute's reflection said: "Is there not a thing that you call the 'Committee of Council upon Education'?" "Yes," I said, "there is." "Am I on it?" "Yes." "Very well, then, tell the Lord President I wish it to be summoned at once." It was summoned, and I should think, for the first and last time in existence, all the official members of this heterogeneous body met. We sat in a semicircle, Lord Beaconsfield in the centre, and I at the extreme outside.

"I understand," said Lord Beaconsfield, "that the Vice-President has a statement to make to us." I then proceeded to state my case as best I could, letting down the Lord President and the Chancellor of the Exchequer as much as possible.

When I had finished, there was a dead silence, whereupon Lord Beaconsfield remarked: "I do move that the Committee of Council upon Education do agree with the Vice-President." There was not a word of opposition to this motion, both the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Lord President looking rather foolish.

This story is a good illustration of Lord Beaconsfield's extraordinary adroitness and resource in personal difficulties, and it also showed his overpowering influence with his colleagues when he chose to assert it. I must, in justice, say that the Lord President, who at heart was a most excellent fellow, never showed any resentment for the course I had adopted, and I am not sure that in his innermost mind he was not pleased to be thus extricated from the untenable position in which he had placed himself.

A comical incident occurred on my first official reception of a deputation at the Education Department. The London School Board had some difference with the Department, and Mrs. Westlake, an æsthetic lady always beautifully dressed, was the head of the deputation. I was anxious to receive them with appropriate grace and dignity. Shortly before they arrived, in trying to light a cigarette, the head of an exceptionally big lucifer match fell off, and I could not find it. My chair was a solid wooden one, and my trousers were of a rough woollen material. After the deputation had been introduced, and I had risen from my chair to welcome them, I resumed my seat, and in doing so ignited the match-head, which burnt a hole in my trousers and beyond. I bounded

up in the air, to the amusement of the deputation, and a smell of burnt trouser and flesh pervaded the room. The deputation was very human, and after a momentary grin we settled down to work and soon came to an amicable agreement, to which the burnt match-head was an unconscious contributor.

In the spring of 1879, my wife and I were asked by our cousins, Lord and Lady Arthur Russell, to a dinner of exceptional political and historical interest. The Crown Prince and Princess of Germany were then in London on a visit, and the latter expressed a great wish to meet those who were supposed to have had an influence by their writings upon our policy in Afghanistan and South Africa. The Princess, in addition, wished to see certain artistic and scientific luminaries. At this dinner there were present the Crown Prince and Princess, and young Prince William, who took my wife in to dinner. The latter was then in his twentieth year, but he was at that time so shy and undeveloped as to give little sign of the qualities and attributes which he has shown since he became Emperor of Germany. There were also present Sir Henry Rawlinson, Mr. Froude, Sir Henry Maine, Sir Frederick Leighton, Sir Louis Mallet, Professor Seeley and Professor Huxley, and Sir Edward Poynter. I sat next to Froude, who had just returned from South Africa. He had, during his stay there, contributed a number of articles to the public press upon the condition and future of that country. He talked delightfully, but he took an extraordinarily pessimistic view of the position of the white

racés in South Africa. He pointed out to me that there was a virile and intelligent race, physically stronger than the average European, who were multiplying and increasing faster than white men under the influence of civilisation, and that these Zulus and Kaffirs would ultimately demolish the white race. I asked him what was his policy, and in a gloomy tone he informed me there was no policy but to exterminate them. I pointed out to him the extreme difficulty of such a policy in these days of sentiment and humanitarianism. He replied: "If you do not adopt that policy, they will exterminate you."

A few months afterwards I noted that he was giving a series of lectures at the Philosophical Institute in Edinburgh on South Africa. My curiosity was excited as to how he would put his singularly bloodthirsty theories into a shape which would be palatable to his audience. In the meantime he had entirely changed his views, and his method for settling the South African problem was to treat the native races with firmness but perfect justice. Notwithstanding his rare literary ability, he did not impress me as a reliable or far-seeing thinker.

The work of the Education Department was terribly meticulous and dull after the India Office. I had to administer about three Acts of Parliament under a code. That code consisted of one hundred and fifty regulations and seven schedules. It dealt with the minutest detail connected with school life, and so tied the managers and teachers with red-tape regulations that all individuality or initiative was knocked out of them.

The Manchester theory of testing everything by pecuniary results ran throughout the whole administration of education. The teacher who could make the individual child earn the most on a system of payment by results was looked upon as the best teacher, there being a regular scale of so much for reading, writing, and arithmetic, so much for every child in a class that was taught a class subject, and so much for every child who was taught a specific subject. The children were taught far more subjects than it was possible for them to digest during the limited period of their education; but during the time they were at school they were mere paying-machines, and the more they earned under this pernicious system of forcing, the better pleased were those in charge of education.

Lowe had the credit of starting this system of payment by results. One day, when I was sitting next to him on a Committee, I asked him if he approved of the present methods of administration based on payment by results which were then in force. To my amazement he replied: "If you will move for its total abolition in the House of Commons, I will second it." I said to him: "You are aware that you are supposed to have started and created the system?" "Yes," he said, "I know the fools say so. What happened was this: when I was at the Education Department, as my eyes hurt me a good deal, whenever I went into the country I used to send to the National School to ask them to let me have one or two boys or girls who could read well, and they used to come up and read to me in the evening.

I found out that few, if any, of these boys or girls could really read. They got over words of three syllables, but five syllables completely stumped them. I therefore came to the conclusion that, as regards reading, writing, and arithmetic, which are three subjects which can be definitely tested, each child should either read or write a passage, or do some simple sum of arithmetic to show that they were entitled to the grant which was given for reading, writing, and arithmetic, and the idiots who succeeded me have piled up on the top of the three R's a mass of class and specific subjects which they propose to test in the same way. The result is wholesale cramming and superficiality, for the great majority of the children who pass through these class and specific subjects lose all knowledge of them a few months after they have left school."

In the science classes the evil reached serious dimensions. One pound was paid for every child who passed in certain branches of science. There was a notable case of fraud in which the children had been taught in advance the answers to the questions in the examination papers. In the inquiry which took place, it was there clearly proved that, although this school had obtained some £600 or £700 a year for teaching science, there was not one boy in ten who, a few months after he left school, could recollect anything of the subject for teaching which the school had received this sum. I did what little I could to lessen the rigour of this system, and I am glad to say that the Education Department have in recent years broken away from it, but, for a generation to

come, I am afraid that the blighting effect of the system of payment by results will affect our whole system of National Education.

On the first occasion upon which I presented the Educational Estimates, Gladstone and Forster impressed upon me that the expenditure I proposed was as high as was permissible, and I ought to take care in no sense to allow it to increase. It was then 15s. per child. What it is now I do not recollect, but I expect I am correct in saying that it is three times that amount. I should not in the least grudge this expenditure, provided it was associated with a corresponding benefit; but I am afraid all who have even partially considered our system of education are obliged to admit that, whilst it is the most expensive of any elementary system in Europe, it is very unsatisfactory in its results.

In this session a curious incident occurred, showing that even in the most rancorous phases of Parliamentary controversy there lies at bottom a latent sense of fair play and justice which comes to the surface, no matter what its restraint may be. Mr. Holmes, an advertising Radical Member of Parliament, put down a vote of censure upon the Prime Minister for appointing Mr. Pigott Controller of the Stationery Department. The notice came on suddenly, and Northcote, as Government spokesman, did not know the facts of the case. It was alleged by Holmes that Pigott was the son of a Hughenden rector,* that the Hughenden rectpr was an out-and-out political supporter of Disraeli, and that, in consequence, his son was appointed to this post without any

knowledge of his duties and contrary to the recommendations of a Select Committee. Northcote allowed these statements to pass unchallenged, and in the division which followed he was beaten by a small majority, our men not liking the case as it was presented to them. Lord Beaconsfield was much annoyed. In a personal vindication in the House of Lords he showed that it was more than thirty years ago that Pigott *père* was Rector of Hughenden, that he was a Radical in politics, and that he, Beaconsfield, never saw the son, and that the appointment was made in accordance with the special recommendations of a Committee appointed to look into the management of the Stationery Office. The Lords accepted the statement, and in the Commons Mr. Holmes admitted that he had been misled, and the notice of censure was erased from the records of the House *nemine contradicente*.

CHAPTER XV

Carnarvon's resignation—Bartle Frere in South Africa—His action—Salisbury and Derby at Grillion's Club—Obstruction development—Parnell—Combination of bad luck against Government—Prediction of defeat—Midlothian campaign—Fall of Beaconsfield's Government.

LORD CARNARVON, some time before he resigned his office of Colonial Secretary, appointed Sir Bartle Frere High Commissioner of South Africa. At the time of his appointment, Sir Bartle Frere was a Member of the Council of India. Lord Salisbury was not consulted as to the appointment.

The Transvaal had been annexed before Sir Bartle Frere arrived in South Africa, and the chief reason for this annexation was the belief that the white man in the Transvaal would be unable to cope with a general native rising, of which there were premonitory symptoms. The Treasury of the Transvaal was bankrupt, for the goldfields had not yet been discovered, and the armed forces of the Republic had recently been beaten by Secocoeni, a powerful Zulu chief to the north of the Transvaal, and Cetewayo—a still more powerful chief to the south-west of the Transvaal—had a large and admirably organised Zulu army on the native system which was burning to wet its spears in European blood.

Sir Bartle Frere had many admirable qualities,

but he was not at any time a believer in a policy of "masterly inactivity." Under the softest of manners and of voices there was in him an indomitable spirit of action and expansion, and he considered it necessary, though the tendency of his instructions was in the contrary direction, to present an ultimatum to Cetewayo, which it was a foregone conclusion he would reject. The disaster of Isandhlwana followed. Large reinforcements had to be sent hastily to South Africa, and the Zulu military machine was subsequently smashed at the battle of Ulundi. These proceedings provoked a vote of censure on the Government in the Commons, but there was no case, as the tone and direction of the dispatches of the Secretary of State for the Colonies were too clear to admit of misrepresentation. With all my admiration for Sir Bartle Frere, I always regretted that he thus forced the pace. It was the military strength of the Zulu troops and the supposed inability of the Transvaal farmers to withstand them that was the *raison d'être* of the annexation of that territory. As soon as we had destroyed the *raison d'être* for the annexation, the Transvaal State rose against us. If a more timely policy had been adopted, it is clear that when the natives did attack—as they were certain to do—the white men, Briton and Boer, would have fought side by side against the common danger overhanging them, and much subsequent unrest, disquietude, and bloodshed which have since occurred in South Africa would, in my judgment, have been obviated.

There was in those days no telegraphic cable

to South Africa. This communication was completed in 1881 in time to recall Lord Roberts before he had employed his army in defeating the Boers and wiping out all recollection of their victory of Majuba Hill. Cable communication, or the lack of it, thus played us a double trick ; it did not prevent Sir Bartle Frere from departing from his instructions, but it did prevent Lord Roberts from executing his original orders.

Towards the close of 1879, Lord Salisbury announced, as “news of great joy,” the offensive and defensive alliance just formed between Germany and Austro-Hungary. The political conditions of Europe since that date have indeed changed. This alliance, which we then hoped would permanently prevent the Great Powers of Europe from becoming involved in a general war arising from a recrudescence of the Eastern Question, has now deliberately utilised a regrettable incident so as to provoke the greatest and bloodiest war of which history has record, in the vain hope that through its instrumentality Germany may dominate and enslave the remainder of Europe.

In the discussion following the retirement of Lord Derby from the Foreign Office, he twice in the House of Lords broke the traditions of a Cabinet Minister by publicly stating what he believed had occurred in the discussion in the Cabinet. According to the recollection of all of his old colleagues, the allegations he made were contrary to what did actually occur. On the occasion of the second offence, a scene occurred in the House of Lords. All his old colleagues were infuriated at the repetition of this breach of confidence, and Lord

Salisbury as their spokesman likened him to Titus Oates, and rather implied that Titus Oates might take objection to the comparison.

Both Lord Derby and Lord Salisbury were big men physically, and both very shy socially. There is a well-known dining club called Grillion's, at which on every Monday in the session a dinner is ready for all who care to come to it. The late Lord Morley and I left the Houses of Parliament to dine at Grillion's. On arriving at the ante-room, we found two big, very confused figures standing in the remotest corners of the room, and each ignoring the other's presence. No one else came to dinner, so we sat down four—Lord Salisbury at the head of the table, Lord Morley next to him, I on the other side of him, and Lord Derby next to me. The conversation was at first somewhat strained. Lord Morley and I contrived to make some general remarks, and we then both found out that if one of the two belligerents addressed a question to a neutral, the other belligerent would reply to it through the other neutral. So we progressed. The ice of non-recognition was broken between these two distinguished men, and I think the work of the neutrals that night did re-establish permanent speaking conditions between two statesmen, to both of whom I was personally much indebted.

From the time he entered the House of Commons in 1876 up to the dissolution in 1880, Parnell made his personality more and more felt. Of all the many distinguished men in politics with whom I came in contact, he was the most inscrutable and original. There was a touch of unreason almost

amounting to insanity on both sides of his parentage. He had not a symptom of the attributes usually associated with Irishmen—no geniality, no sense of humour, no idea of give-and-take, and no imagination. He was stern, concentrated, inflexible, and unscrupulous. He won his way by sheer determination and a total disregard of all the amenities and obligations of Parliamentary life. The flabby, illogical, and powerless procedure of the House of Commons gave him his chance, and he used it remorselessly.

The guiding principle of the House of Commons procedure had its origin in the vast number of placemen who dominated that assembly right up to so late a period as 1750, or even later. To give the fullest freedom of speech and interrogation to a comparatively few independent Members on all occasions and under all circumstances was the original object of the rules of debate for the House of Commons. There was no established machinery for stopping debate, and so long as the free Members were in a minority, and the debates were not reported, and the House itself was the only and final Court of Appeal to which a Member of Parliament could address himself, the rules worked tolerably well. But so soon as reports were published the speakers began more and more to appeal to public opinion outside. An English or Scottish Member of Parliament who outraged the House of Commons by gross and persistent misuse of its rules generally knew that by such misconduct he would imperil his seat at the next election. Not so in Ireland. Amongst the extreme Nationalists the more their representative

defied everybody and everything in the House of Commons the better pleased they were, and the more popular with this section of opinion became the Parliamentary delinquent.

Parnell set himself early in his Parliamentary career to defy all the traditions and rules of political life. He found out that a very limited number of Members with unlimited assurance and power of tongue could stop the whole executive and legislative work of the country. To that end he applied himself with unflinching resolution. There was no closure in those days, no power of finishing a debate, no power to check perpetual motions for adjournment. Upon one stage of a Bill to consolidate South African administration which was practically unopposed, the House of Commons was kept sitting continuously more than twenty-six hours, and the obstructionists only numbered from five to seven of the whole House. The Speaker declined to move outside the letter of the rules. Parnell thus became a power, and he used his power to bully, browbeat, and blackmail the Government.

We were then powerless, and in proportion as obstruction became more and more potent in the House of Commons, so did Parnell become more popular and powerful in Ireland. When, after the election of 1880, he became the Nationalist Leader, he ruled his followers with an iron but disdainful hand. His discipline was modelled on the Prussian military system: obedience—immediate, wholesale, and perpetual. But it answered for a time. He brought an absolutely disciplined and solid phalanx, amounting ultimately to eighty votes, into the

House of Commons, and this body for years knew no law save his own. On the other hand, it is only fair to Parnell to say that it was with considerable reluctance that he took up the "No rent" cry, and in his latter years he showed a statesmanlike instinct, both in his attempts to restrain the more extreme Members of his party and in trying to get the Irish Land Question into a workable shape. Up to 1880 Parnell gave little indication of these better qualities. On the contrary, in the House of Commons he was a lawless rebel against all authority and any attempts to establish reason and order in debate.

Inability to enforce authority always impresses the general public with a sense of contempt for those who so fail, and not the least of the causes which contributed to the overthrow of Lord Beaconsfield's Government on the general election of 1880 was the idea that the Government itself was largely to blame for the obstruction and disorder which became so prevalent in the House of Commons.

We were very unlucky during the last eighteen months of our tenure of office. Trade was depressed and the revenue lost all expansion, and on the top of this financial depression there came in 1879 the worst harvest of a generation. The recrudescence of the Afghan trouble, due to the murder at Cabul of Cavagnari and his mission, and the ultimatum of Frere to Cetewayo, with its consequent fighting, gave colour to the accusation of the Opposition that, so long as Lord Beaconsfield was in office, there would be no peace. In Ireland, owing to the failure of the potato crop, there was

acute distress on the western coast, and Parnell took prompt advantage of this distress to raise a formidable organisation against the landlords which ultimately became the "Land League."

Gladstone was exhibiting at the age of seventy a superhuman energy as a stump orator. He worked up with marvellous skill and eloquence an ubiquitous and most unfair indictment against everything said or done by the Government of Lord Beaconsfield. I more than once warned Lord Beaconsfield that the forces operating against us were so widespread in their origin and so plausibly utilised that I was afraid we should be beaten at the impending election. He would not credit me, as the party managers, misled by the results of the two by-elections, told him the reverse. Upon the last occasion on which I saw him before the election, he was just recovering from a severe attack of gouty asthma, and was in consequence very weak. He asked me to give him an arm, as he wished to see if he could walk. He was miserably feeble, and I expressed concern, at which he replied: "Yes, I am far from well, but I have a clever doctor who cooks me up when I have anything public to do. I then manage to crawl to the Treasury Bench, and when I get there I look as fierce as I can." It was impossible not to admire the dauntless spirit of this old man, contrasted with the frail body in which it was enshrined. The spirit so dominated the flesh that Lord Beaconsfield at that moment, though the subject of bitter hostility in his own country, was looked upon outside as the foremost and most successful statesman of the day, with the exception

of Bismarck, and his influence and power throughout Europe were immense. Though he made no public speech before or during the election of 1880, his letter to the Duke of Marlborough (then Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland) foretold with his usual analytical skill the dangerous termination of the Irish policy of his great rival. Upon every platform and in every speech up to 1885, that prediction was emphatically repudiated by Gladstone. Then the mask was thrown up, and in 1886 he appeared, as his rival had foreseen, an out-and-out supporter of a separate Parliament for Ireland. But the campaign for the moment was overwhelmingly successful, and Gladstone on the termination of the election had an apparent majority of 160 over the supporters of his rival.

The Nemesis, however, of the Midlothian campaign was prompt and overpowering, as is shown by subsequent political history. From 1880 up to the end of his political career, Gladstone never again became his own master; he was tied to, and his reputation burned at, the very stakes he had prepared for the *auto-da-fé* of his great opponent. The thesis was very simple which he had elaborated with such marvellous skill and eloquence. Lord Beaconsfield was the cause of all the difficulties and embarrassments affecting national policy. "Get rid of him, and everything now wrong will in due course of time gradually right itself." But the difficulties adhered as closely to Gladstone as Prime Minister as they did to his predecessor, and in almost every case he was ultimately compelled in self-defence to have violent recourse to the very methods he had

so energetically repudiated and denounced on the platform.

Thus fell the Beaconsfield Government. When the dust and glamour of the election passed away, it was generally felt that this Government had left a creditable record behind it. Every attempt to reverse its foreign and imperial policy ended in failure and mishap, and the social legislation placed upon the Statute Book was not only good in itself, but has since become the basis of much subsequent beneficial legislation.

CHAPTER XVI

Midlothian campaign—Success—Retribution—Fourth Party—
Compensation for Disturbance Bill—Rejection of scheme for
purchase of London Water Companies—Failure of session—
Mundella at Education Office—Disorder and outrage in
Ireland—Captain Boycott.

GLADSTONE had achieved his purpose. He had ousted his opponent from office ; he had once more become the undisputed leader of the whole Radical and Liberal Party ; he had a vast majority behind him in Parliament, and he had as colleagues a singularly able body of men. Like all men who believe that a mission has been given to them to execute, and who succeed in its execution, he was in a state of high exaltation and beatitude in the early stages of his apparent return to power. In all that relates to the mechanism of party government there never was a leader in a better position—unquestionable authority, most capable colleagues, and an admiring and huge majority. But the next five years was the record of the most complete and humiliating failure to realise the expectations and undertakings of his platform oratory. So hopeless did his position ultimately become that he was forced in 1885 to resign, in order that his political opponents, though in a large minority, might carry on the government of the country until a new Reform Act came into operation.

I have before me a mass of literature relating to the campaign in Midlothian, which ended in the return of Gladstone with a majority of 215. As brother-in-law to Lord Dalkeith, whose seat he was contesting, I took an active part in that election, both in speaking and otherwise. In an address which I gave in January 1880 to the Conservative Association of the University of Edinburgh, I described, and—as it seems to me after a long lapse of time—with perfect fairness and accuracy, the nature and consequence of Gladstone's crusade :

“ In the months which have elapsed since I accepted your invitation, a great electioneering phenomenon has occurred. Mr. Gladstone has visited Scotland, and Scotland has given him a reception such as few public men had ever received before. The duties of political life are reciprocal, and if a country gives a distinguished man a national reception, he should endeavour in return to be national in his utterances by sinking the partisan in the patriot, the politician in the statesman. In one sense Mr. Gladstone's repayment was unique. For I find that, excluding minor addresses at railway stations, or from railway bridges, railway carriages, and other locomotive machines, he spoke 37 columns of the *Times* newspaper. Every column has on the average 232 lines, and every line 10 words ; multiplying the three together, we get a grand total of 85,840 words. I have read with care the whole of these 85,840 words, and their substance can be summarised in a sentence : The infamy of Lord Beaconsfield's policy is only equalled by the villainy with which he has carried it out.

“ This fecundity of speech is fortunately rare

in our public life. Statesmen's words are supposed to derive influence, not from their volume, but their weight. No one, least of all a man of high-strung, nervous temperament, can speak in a few days 85,840 words to excitable audiences without himself unconsciously drifting towards the line that divides fact from fiction, sense and reason from rant and passion. But when the orator is the foremost man of his party, when the subjects upon which he speaks affect the fortunes and destinies of nations, when the moral generalisations and principles perpetually evolved to meet every personal difficulty are to form the basis of legislation at home, and of foreign policy abroad, then this verbosity becomes a positive danger to the commonwealth. The process of degeneration is continuous and rapid. The statesman becomes more and more merged in the politician, the politician in the partisan, the partisan in the election agent, reckless as to the means by which he wins, provided only that he does win. Mr. Gladstone was perfectly frank. At all risks and hazards, Lord Beaconsfield's Government must be got rid of, was his ever-recurring refrain. But the extent to which, in order to attain this end, he himself is prepared to go, both in mis-stating the case against his rival and in catching votes, a calm perusal of those 85,840 words alone reveals.

"For any Conservative to speak now in Scotland without in some way noticing Mr. Gladstone's indictment would be absurd; it would, however, be equally ridiculous for me in any way to put myself in personal competition with him. Fortunately, I need not adopt either course. Mr. Gladstone appealed with confidence from 'Philip drunk to Philip sober.' Adapting the metaphor to modern requirements, I appeal

with equal confidence from Mr. Gladstone on the stump to Mr. Gladstone in office,—for the most effective reply to his words in Mid-Lothian is to recall his deeds in Downing Street.”

Subsequent to the date of my address, Gladstone made speeches which were in volume double what he had already said; 250,000 words is, therefore, a low estimate of his utterances in Scotland. Like the centaur's shirt, they clung to him, and do what he could he was never able as Prime Minister to shake off their mortifying contact.

Within a few days of accepting office, he had to make a public and most humiliating apology to the Emperor of Austria for words used on the platform. Whether what he said was true or justifiable was immaterial: what was brought home to the whole political world was that the rôle of a partisan stump orator and that of Prime Minister of Great Britain were absolutely incompatible. The greater the success achieved in the first sphere of action, the greater the penalty paid by the nation when the stump orator became the First Minister of the Crown.

But the immediate effect of these unfortunate speeches was felt right throughout the whole Empire. Lord Beaconsfield's policy was everywhere to be reversed.

The Boers, without asking Gladstone's leave, proceeded to reverse it in the Transvaal by a revolt against the British suzerainty.

Ireland was in a most inflammatory and dangerous condition. The precautionary measures

of Peace Preservation and Arms Laws passed by the late Government were allowed to lapse in accordance with the dicta of Midlothian politics, and Ireland passed out of the control of the executive Government.

In India Lord Ripon replaced Lord Lytton. The latter's policy, both internal and external, had been heavily censured, and its reversal was a prominent feature in the millennium about to be established. Our external policy declined to accommodate itself to the vagaries of the hustings, and it so reasserted itself in Afghanistan, as I have previously shown, that the assurances, only asked for conditionally a few years back and refused, had to be enlarged and unconditionally given to a new ruler in Afghanistan.

Lord Lytton had passed two Bills—an Arms Act and a Press Act. Both worked admirably without any friction or popular resentment. Both were repealed by Gladstone, though prominent members of the Indian Government implored that they might only be suspended. It is no exaggeration to say that the inability of the Indian Government, due to the repeal of these Acts, subsequently to restrain the violence of certain native newspapers largely contributed to the unrest of a certain section in India and to the repeated assassination of officials. So much was this felt that Lord Morley only recently as Secretary of State for India re-enacted in a far more repressive form than before the laws so thoughtlessly repealed in 1880.

In Central Asia events so shaped themselves that precautionary measures against Russia, far

exceeding in their cost and dimensions those adopted by Lord Beaconsfield, had to be summarily taken by Gladstone.

In Egypt the same phenomena were repeated. Constant efforts to ignore our responsibilities there only increased local disturbance and defeat. We were at last forced to act, but our action was so belated that we only succeeded in squandering much treasure and many lives without rescuing Gordon or rehabilitating our influence.

The Parliamentary history of the next five years is the record of the failures and disasters I have epitomised.

The Conservative Party was not only greatly reduced in size, but was much depressed in spirits by the heavy beating it had received at the polls. The Radicals were somewhat lucky. Though their majority was large in populous districts, outside London and the home counties they won a large number of small constituencies by narrow majorities. It was calculated that a turnover of 4000 votes properly distributed in these closely contested constituencies would have established an equilibrium between the parties arrayed against one another. In the county of Middlesex my colleague and I were returned by a majority of over 4000 votes, Herbert Gladstone being our antagonist. Several political optimists wrote to me pointing out what might have happened if these superfluous votes in Middlesex had been given elsewhere. All such calculations are, in my judgment, purely moonshine. You cannot eliminate one element in a general election and make it entirely favourable

to your interests without causing counteraction and disturbance elsewhere. We were not only solidly beaten, but the Government, being reinforced by Chamberlain and William Harcourt, was in debating powers far more than a match for our Front Bench. It had been weak even when it had the prestige and authority of the Government behind it ; deprived of these extraneous influences it became, for the time being, quite incapable of holding its own with the Treasury Bench.

Lord Randolph Churchill at once stepped into the fray, and associating Arthur Balfour, Sir John Gorst, and Sir Henry Drummond Wolff with him from the beginning of the session, carried on with extraordinary brilliance and pertinacity a guerilla warfare against the Government.

Parnell was now the acknowledged leader of about 40 Irish Members, there being another body of about 30 who were Moderate Home Rulers, and about 8 Liberals who were not Home Rulers. These in the aggregate, with about 25 Irish Conservatives, constituted the total representation of Ireland.

Within the Parnellite ranks was a group of remarkably clever young men—Sexton, O'Brien, Dillon, O'Connor, Power, Arthur O'Connor, T. P. O'Connor, Healy, and the two Redmonds. All had varying but great Parliamentary aptitude. Sexton, though a self-educated man, was an extraordinarily fine speaker, his main fault being too great facility. Nothing more clearly indicated Parnell's capacity as a leader than that he should have selected and brought into Parliament this combination of

unknown but very able men. From 1880 up to now—a period of more than a generation—the Irish Home Rule Party, with the single exception of Mr. Devlin, have not produced anyone approximating in individual ability the members of this group. In the late Parliament, Parnell, with a backing of only five or six supporters, perpetually defied the whole House of Commons; now at the head of a compact phalanx of 40 Members he early showed his intention of making the House of Commons unmanageable and Ireland ungovernable.

The Irish Secretary, Forster, was a rugged Radical of considerable ability and great courage, and at the outset most considerably disposed towards tenants as opposed to landlords; but his good intentions were pooh-poohed and summarily put on one side. A very advanced Land Bill was introduced by the Parnellites. To conciliate them Forster took certain of its clauses and made them into a Government Bill designated the “Compensation for Disturbance Bill.” This action was not liked by the Moderate Liberals, and the Government had great difficulty, even with the support of the Parnellites, in pushing it through its various stages. Gladstone’s main argument was that 15,000 evictions were impending, many of which had already taken place, that under those circumstances he could not be responsible for the government of Ireland unless something was done to stop these wholesale evictions. He so reiterated the point that he excited my suspicions. I made inquiries in reliable quarters and found that he had con-

fused applications for process of ejectment with evictions. In many parts of Ireland a notice of ejectment was the only effective means of getting rents paid, and every Irishman knew the difference between this preliminary process and the final stage of eviction. I moved an amendment in order to utilise the information I had obtained, and I was able to show that in the two counties with which I was most familiar—Tyrone and Donegal—the notices of ejectment were 40 and 156 respectively, but the evictions were nil in the first county and only 18 in the second. The Government were thunderstruck and had nothing to say, and although they managed to carry the Bill through the House of Commons after this debate, it was a foregone conclusion that the House of Lords would not accept it.

Mr. Fowler (afterwards Lord Wolverhampton) made his Parliamentary début in this debate. He boldly took the bull by the horns, ridiculed all statistics, and said that if the Bill would only remedy a single instance of injustice he would vote for it. He subsequently developed into a first-class Parliamentary speaker, solid and close in his reasoning, and adorning his arguments with just enough of sentiment and humour to vary a fine but somewhat monotonous delivery. He would have made a much bigger name for himself if he could have mustered up courage to come over and sit on our side, as for many years of his life his views were much more in consonance with those whom he ostensibly opposed than with those with whom he was supposed to act.

For some time previous to the overthrow of the late Government, a strong movement developed itself in London in favour of the acquisition by a public authority of the water supply of the Metropolis from private companies. The great success which had attended similar movements in the provinces, notably in Birmingham, made many Local Government reformers keen on pressing this change. Sir Richard Cross, then Secretary of State for the Home Department, employed a very capable actuary and surveyor, Mr. Smith by name, to negotiate with the Water Companies as to the terms upon which they would part with their enterprises. Smith conducted his negotiations with great ability, and at the commencement of 1880 he presented a scheme to the Home Secretary by which he had obtained, on certain conditions, the assent of the whole of the Companies to the acquisition of their enterprises by a public authority. Sir Richard Cross was so pleased with the proposals made, which were very advantageous, in his judgment, to the public and would result in a large saving to the ratepayers, that he insisted on embodying these propositions in a Bill which he presented to Parliament very shortly before the general election.

The scheme was good, but the terms offered to the Water Companies were liberal, and they were liberal because it was found that great economies would ensue from a unified system of administration, and that the Companies were on the eve of a great acquisition of income, having laid water-mains through the greater part of the

unoccupied parts of the Metropolitan Water Board districts which were rapidly becoming inhabited. Unfortunately, some Jew Radical speculators on the Stock Exchange proceeded to push the Water shares up to a very high figure. This aroused popular suspicion. Any cry at that time was good enough for the Radical Party, provided it could damage Lord Beaconsfield and his Government, and so the cry went out right throughout London that the Bill was a gross job, tending to benefit the Companies at the expense of the ratepayers in London; and the false statements and accusations so freely circulated on this subject largely contributed to the wholesale defeat of the Government candidates in the Metropolis.

Sir William Harcourt succeeded Sir Richard Cross at the Home Office, and one of his first performances was to appoint a Select Committee to examine into the agreement made by his predecessor with the Water Companies. Sir Richard Cross, Mr. Sclater Booth (afterwards Lord Basing), and myself were appointed to represent the late Government. I never was on a more unfair Committee, or one the procedure of which was so contrary to every principle of justice and fair play. Harcourt, instead of acting in a judicial capacity, led the opposition to the agreement by a merciless cross-examination of Smith, and brought all his great legal attainments to bear in breaking down the statements made by that gentleman. The Metropolitan Water Board and the City of London were both hostile to the Bill, so the able counsel that were employed by these

two bodies harried on both flanks the unfortunate Smith. Sir Richard Cross was somewhat dazed by the late defeat of the Government, and we could not get him in any way to exercise his faculties or to stand up against the onslaught made upon his agreement. The Committee were obviously appointed to kill the agreement, which they did. Harcourt, with great skill, fastened upon the one weak point in the general agreement made with the Water Companies. It was very essential to bring in all the Companies, and the weakest Company, namely, the Chelsea Water Company, held out and only could be induced to come in by an offer of exceptionally good terms. Upon these good terms Harcourt and the counsel concentrated their attention, and practically they never went outside this one particular part of the agreement. The Committee reported against the whole agreement.

When the report was under consideration I was obliged to be away, but neither Sclater Booth nor I could induce Cross to draw up a separate report or to move the amendments which would have vindicated our position. The agreement was therefore repudiated.

Some twenty years later public pressure was such that the Government was forced to bring in a similar Bill. The difference between the price which they then paid and the compensation to which, under Smith's scheme, the Water Companies would have been entitled, showed the cheapness and excellence of the proposed arrangement in 1880.

Few things in my public life disgusted me

more than the conduct of this Committee. I have benefited more than most people by the party system, yet at times its methods and results are abominable, and this was an instance where an excellent arrangement (as any fair-minded man who looked at it as a whole would admit) was deliberately pushed on one side in order that a small party victory might be recorded; and this ephemeral party victory imposed upon the rate-payers of London a permanent fine of many millions sterling.

The sequel of the proceedings of the Committee was sad. Smith, who was in bad health at the time of his examination, suddenly died. Harcourt, who was a very kind man at heart, was frightfully perturbed at the result of his unfair treatment of Smith. He came over to us in the Opposition in the House of Commons almost with tears in his eyes, and stated he only wished he had known that Smith was in bad health when he was under cross-examination.

Harcourt, like so many prominent party politicians, was a very two-sided character. In public, when speaking, especially if interrupted or annoyed, his manner was most aggressive. His commanding physique emphasised his overbearing demeanour. But in private life he was a kindly personage, the refuge of his relations and friends in trouble, and in society most amusing, and very quick in repartee. Once, however, I recollect his being utterly floored and left without reply. We had a cheery dinner-party at the time he had changed his views on Home Rule, and he was also at this time becoming physically very heavy

and large. Chaffing Charlie Beresford, who was opposite him, he said: "Come, Charlie, you don't look much like a statesman." "Come, old man, anyhow I look more of a statesman than you do a weathercock."

Harcourt was a great Parliamentarian and loved the House of Commons, and to his credit it must be said that both in and out of office he always threw his influence against a misuse of the rules and procedure of the House, even when a misuse might have tended to the advantage of his party.

Though the Government sat late into September, the session, from a political point of view, was a failure. A Hare and Rabbit Bill was carried, and in the Budget the Malt Tax was abolished. Gladstone, who had combined the two offices of the First Lord of the Treasury and Chancellor of the Exchequer, showed in the management of that Bill his rare mastery of detail and finance generally; but measures of this kind did not interest the constituency or satisfy the expectations which had been aroused. The repeal of the Malt Tax resulted in adulterated beer, as the brewer in the place of malt was allowed to substitute any sweet composition.

Outside Parliament affairs were not going well. In Ireland, South Africa, on the north-west frontier of India, and in attempts to give effect to the provision of the Treaty of Berlin, all was amiss. The strong man was gone, and the "sophistical rhetorician" reigned in his place. An attempt was made to transfer the blame for the failure of the session upon the garrulity and obstructive

tactics of the Fourth Party. A full-dress debate of indictment against this party was arranged ; but Midlothian utterances intervened, and the Fourth Party came out scathless.

During his electioneering campaign Gladstone had written in the *Nineteenth Century* an article justifying, if not eulogising, obstruction under certain conditions. I carefully put this article on one side, and before the debate gave it to Randolph Churchill. He made such excellent use of it as to confound his assailants.

Towards the end of the session Gladstone became ill, and almost simultaneously with his illness Parnell threatened to stop all Government estimates unless concessions of a far-reaching character were made to Ireland. The session closed in gloom for the Ministers and their following.

Mr. Mundella had succeeded me at the Education Office. He was an ardent educationalist, but of the type who looked more to the volume of the expenditure incurred in education than to the ultimate results achieved by it. I had two schemes in embryo which I left behind me at the Education Office. The first was the application of compulsory attendance at school to all parts of the country. To this he gave effect. The second was an attempt further to grade primary education so as to ensure for the ordinary child a grip of a few subjects, and for the cleverer children schools where the class and extra specific subjects now perfunctorily taught should be thoroughly taught. I attached great importance to this scheme, though I admit it required patience and firmness for its realisation. Every sound educationalist knows

that the curriculum of the subjects taught to children should be regulated by the age at which their education ceases. Of all forms of education the worst for the children of the industrial class is an ambitious programme truncated by the necessity of the children going to work before they have mastered the extra subjects taught. I got the assent of the Government to the higher-grade schools, and I was preparing for the lower-grade schools a simpler and more compact curriculum. Mundella took my higher-grade schools, and instead of simplifying the curriculum in the lower-grade schools he added an extra standard to those already in existence and additional specific subjects. In my judgment, this was a fatal blunder, and one which in no small degree has contributed to the poor returns achieved by the mongrel but expensive scheme of primary and secondary education into which after this change we subsequently drifted.

During the autumn and winter months the agitation carried on by the Land League, and supported by murder and outrage in many counties, reduced the authoritative executive in Ireland to zero. They had deliberately deprived themselves of every particle of special authority and legislation, preferring to trust to the good will of the Irish people. Parnell promptly stepped into their shoes, and in a number of speeches laid down a plan of campaign which, supported by outrage and boycotting, made him master of a large part of Ireland.

The word "boycott," now in universal application, came into use under the following circum-

stances. Captain Boycott, a large resident farmer in Mayo, was agent to Lord Erne for his estate in that county. He had a difference with the tenants upon that estate, and they by pressure and intimidation frightened away all his labourers and servants. He was wholly isolated and unable either to get in the harvest or to continue the cultivation of his farm. A number of Protestant labourers volunteered in the north of Ireland to go to his help, and it was further proposed to organise an armed force to travel with them for their protection. The Government, however, intervened and undertook this duty. So out of hand had the agrarian population become in the disaffected neighbourhood that the force protecting fifty labourers amounted to from 5000 to 7000. Captain Boycott was relieved, his crops harvested, and the northern labourers returned successfully and without a scratch to their homes. "Boycotting" from that day onwards became a household word.

The Government's last effort to rehabilitate themselves under the ordinary law took the form of a criminal indictment of Parnell and other leaders of the Land League before a special jury in Dublin. This essay, as everyone told them in advance, ended in a fiasco.

The restoration of authority in Ireland now became the burning question of the moment, and it was under these disquieting conditions that Gladstone, only eight months after his complete electoral triumph, had to meet his supporters in Parliament in January 1887.

CHAPTER XVII.

Effect on Commons of Nationalist Party—Introduction of Coercion Bills—Determined obstruction—Suspension of the whole Irish Party—Closure regulation carried—Outbreak in Transvaal—Defeat and death of Colley—Dispatch and recall of Roberts—Debate on evacuation of Kandahar—Last speech of Beaconsfield—His death—Joint leadership of Salisbury and Northcote—Churchill—Tory democracy—Introduction and passage of Irish Land Bill—Arrest of Parnell.

THE session of 1881 raised momentous and far-reaching issues, and the outcome of the legislation and the changes effected in Parliamentary procedure revolutionised both Ireland and the House of Commons. Eminent Irish Home Rulers—men of the stamp of Grattan, O'Connell, and Parnell—have been credited with the prediction that the compulsory retention of Irishmen in the British House of Commons would “play the devil” with that institution. I use this slang phrase, as it best expresses the process of debasement which must occur where the main object of a large number of the Members is to humiliate and degrade the status and spirit of the institution to which they belong. In a Parliament where such factiousness prevails, its sinister effect can only be counteracted by giving to the majority an inflexible and indisputable procedure; but these epithets are the reverse of the easy-going, slopperty rules of debate and interrogation in the House of Commons.

In the opinion of many Members, their latitude and tolerance are considered to tend to the exaltation and glory of the House of Commons, the theory being that all Members of Parliament are gentlemen, and that if they do not behave as such in Parliament they will lose their influence. To put it plainly, the Irish Members of Parliament, under Parnell's guidance, were specially selected in order that they might upset this tradition, and they all did so, some with regret, some with delight.

Gladstone faced the serious position so largely created by his own thoughtless words and acts with commendable courage, dignity, and resource. All the finer qualities of his complex personality asserted themselves in the terrific Parliamentary contest of the ensuing ten months, and at the end of the session he emerged a temporary victor over a rare combination of disorderly and dangerous influences. His patience, endurance, and the quickness and audacity with which he seized upon every mistake made by his adversaries were a real lesson in Parliamentary tactics, and the constant exhibition of these great powers made one deplore that prescience and sound judgment were not, to an equal extent, a permanent part of his political outfit.

The Queen's Speech predicted a demand for large coercive powers, and it was therefore debated at interminable length. A rising in the Transvaal added to the difficulties of the Government, and the refusal of Turkey to give effect to the conditions accorded to Greece under the Treaty of Berlin brought another unpleasant factor per-

manently into the political foreground. Force and coercion were the sole and only remedies in all the spheres of action affecting the House of Commons, Ireland, the Transvaal, and Turkey. An Irish Coercion Bill was introduced. Under its operations the Habeas Corpus Act was to be suspended, and there was also the introduction of a number of changes and interference with the ordinary law. Bitter and persistent obstruction ensued. The first reading was obstructed night after night, and finally on Monday, the 31st January, a sitting continued without intermission until nine o'clock on Wednesday morning—a period of forty-one hours.

My experience of that debate was curious. I sat up till four o'clock on Tuesday morning; I went home and had three hours' sleep; I then went into the country, where I had a first-rate day's shooting with one of my brothers-in-law. I came home, dined early, went back to the House of Commons at nine o'clock, and remained there till nine o'clock next morning. At nine o'clock the Speaker interfered and, in spite of the Irish Members of Parliament shouting "Privilege, privilege," insisted upon putting the question, which was carried by an overwhelming majority. He acted quite outside his written authority, but he only did so on the understanding that his action should at once be legalised by the introduction and carrying through the House of a resolution making his action legitimate and creating a precedent for the future.

The House adjourned at 9.30 and met again at twelve o'clock, it being a Wednesday and a

Private Members' day. Parnell was not in the House when the debate was closed, but he was back at twelve o'clock, and he tried by question and suggestion to corner the Speaker for his interference, which he characterised as "unconstitutional." The latter, with great skill and dignity, pushed on one side all innuendoes and queries, and Gladstone having given notice of the closure resolution which he proposed to move next day, the House lapsed into the transaction of some humdrum business.

Next day the House reassembled in a state of expectation and excitement. The resolution proposed abolished the full liberty of debate hitherto enjoyed by the House of Commons, and from that point of view it was repugnant to old-fashioned Members. On the other hand, without some such restraint and contraction of debate, it was clear that the House of Commons, as a legislative and administrative body, would practically cease to exist. If the new rule was carried, it would behead the elaborate system of perpetual obstruction by which Parnell and his following had obtained power to thwart the wishes of the House and to bully the executive into concession and submission. The issues at stake being so vast, all anticipated that the fight would be protracted and ferocious. By an unforeseen coincidence which caused the Irish Party first to lose its temper and then its gumption, the resolution, with slight amendments, was carried *nemine contradicente* in one sitting, and came into operation the following day. The incidents were at once both dramatic and grotesque.

The House was in a state of suppressed excitement; nerves were highly strung—so much so that a resolute and combative look was almost visible in the physiognomies of all the leading actors. At the close of question time, just as Gladstone was about to get up to move his resolution, Dillon interpolated a question about Michael Davitt. Next to Parnell, Davitt was perhaps the most popular and powerful personality in the extreme Irish Party. He had been convicted some time back as guilty of treason felony, and he was out on ticket of leave. Dillon asked if the rumour was true that Davitt had been rearrested. Harcourt, then Home Secretary, in his most defiant and disdainful manner, replied that the ticket-of-leave man, Michael Davitt, had been rearrested. Dillon, white with passion, bounded up with another question which Harcourt wholly ignored. Gladstone was then called up by the Speaker, but Dillon was so beside himself with fury that he would not let Gladstone speak, and having become involved in a disorderly wrangle with the Speaker he was suspended for that sitting.

The epidemic of rage now seized Parnell, who also lost his head for the first—and I believe the last—time in his Parliamentary career, and under its influence insisted upon moving that Gladstone be not heard. The Speaker firmly but courteously declined to accept the motion. Parnell thereupon deliberately ignored and defied the Speaker's injunctions, and he too was suspended. All the Irish Party ~~who~~ were present, seeing their leader suspended by an authority of an alien and hateful Parliament, rushed in to participate in a similar

martyrdom. Under one pretext or another, all broke the rules of the House and were similarly punished ; but the folly did not end with them. Outside the House of Commons the news spread of what was going on inside, and every Parnellite Member of Parliament in London who was not present at the opening of the sitting rushed into the House, eager to claim, and successful in obtaining, a like expulsion. After two or three hours of this somewhat comical performance, there was not a Parnellite left to take any part in the discussion on the resolution, and it slipped through without serious or lengthy discussion.

Of all the multifarious subjects which may come before the House of Commons, there is none which so lends itself to discursive discussion and criticism as a resolution proposing a serious alteration in the rules and orders of the House. For weeks, if not months, the Parnellites might, if they had not all lost their reason, have debated and obstructed this resolution, and the Speaker would have been very chary of again exceeding his written authority.

The most momentous change in Parliamentary procedure of the last two hundred years was thus effected easily and quickly, through an unforeseen incident so affecting the Irish Party as to cause them to behave like the Gadarene swine.

It was currently rumoured next day that Parnell apologised to some of his colleagues for his lapse of control. If he had left half a dozen of his supporters behind in the House, they could have retarded the resolution for that night, and

next day his whole following would have been available for persistent obstruction.

I doubt if in the constitutional history of any country a Government were ever so helped when tightening up authority and discipline as Gladstone and his colleagues were by this comical loss of temper on the part of the Parnellite Members.

After this conflict, the course of the Coercion Bill ran on much the same lines as all measures of this character obtain for themselves: great waste of time by tedious repetition, much violent personal abuse of the officials in charge of the Bill, any amount of irrelevant matter introduced at all times and on any pretext into the discussion, followed by violent protests and then the Closure. After a few days' experience of this class of Parliamentary procedure, interest wanes and the House empties itself except to divide. The Closure at that time was moved by the Speaker and required a majority of three to one.

Two Coercive Bills were introduced, one by Forster, which tightened up the law and in certain cases dispensed with the Habeas Corpus Act, and another by Harcourt, which placed prohibitions upon the import, sale, and possession of arms. The difference in the method and manner of the two Ministers in the management of their two respective Bills was very noticeable. Forster, by his sincere but unpolished speech, seemed perpetually to irritate and aggravate the Irish Members. ~~Harcourt~~ Harcourt, on the other hand, by his control and command of the more polished language of the practised advocate, contrived,

with one or two notable exceptions, to handle his opponents very successfully. At last the two measures were placed upon the Statute Book, and then, in accordance with the recognised Whig and Radical practice, a dose of sugar in the shape of a new Land Bill was brought in to sweeten the pill.

Affairs in the Transvaal in the meantime had advanced to such a point that an open rebellion, supported by organised force, against the authority of Great Britain had assumed formidable proportions. Sir George Colley was then Governor of Natal. He was a soldier of exceptional ability and audacity. He had such confidence in the superiority of a trained force over untrained men that he attempted with wholly insufficient forces to engage the Boer army. He was so sure of success that he would not wait for reinforcements, and his rashness subjected him, not only to two reverses, but culminated in the collapse at Majuba Hill, where he lost his life. These three reverses had an immense influence upon the Boer mind, and the impression made upon them was accentuated by the fact that, after Lord Roberts had been sent out with a sufficient force to have vindicated our authority and reputation, the Government suddenly recalled him and entered into negotiations with the Boer leaders.

It was about that time that Gladstone borrowed the words "blood-guiltiness" from the Psalms and utilised them as a vindication for the withdrawal from further conflict with the Boers. I believe that the telegram by which Roberts' previous orders were cancelled was one

of the first messages sent over the cable which had recently been laid down between England and the Cape. It is never safe to attach too much importance to the lobby gossip of the House of Commons, but unquestionably the general opinion on both sides of the House was that it was largely due to Chamberlain that Roberts was recalled. He was not at that time an Imperialist : on the contrary, at the general election of 1880 he told Birmingham that the Gas and Water Bills which he passed for that city were of more importance to them than any Imperial question. Later on, no man realised more bitterly than he did the all-important effect of this terrible blunder of Lord Roberts' recall.

Chamberlain was for many years a colleague, and I had the most sincere admiration for his indomitable and continuous courage, his high aspirations, his extraordinary capacity for work, and his absolute absorption in any duty or task which he undertook. This latter quality carried with it a receptivity which made him all through his political life very sensitive and responsive to the influence of the particular environment in which for the time being he found himself. He had been Mayor of Birmingham, in which post he showed such remarkable initiative and prescience as to raise throughout the whole country the tone and standing of municipal duty. Early in life he had expressed opinions favourable to Republicanism, and it was therefore very repugnant to him to authorise action by which the representatives of an ex-Republic should be crushed by the military forces of monarchical Great

Britain. In everything he undertook Chamberlain was thorough, and therefore it can easily be understood that when he was appointed Secretary of State for the Colonies he became the most successful and pronounced Imperialist of modern days.

There were animated debates in the early part of this session over Kandahar as to whether it should be retained as part of British India or be returned to the Ameer of Afghanistan whom we recently had put upon the throne at Cabul.

Towards the end of March this question was raised in the House of Lords. We flocked to the Upper House, in the anticipation that Beaconsfield would speak. He made a very conciliatory speech as regards Russia, pointing out that there was room enough in Asia for both England and Russia, and ending up by saying: "The keys to India are not at Herat, but in London." I listened with intense delight to this speech. It gave utterance to what I had felt for some time past. Russia was, is, and ought to be our permanent ally, for whatever difficulties may arise where our Empires meet or are likely to meet they are nothing compared with the common interests which both have in the world-wide policy to be pursued in unison for the future.

Coming back to the House of Commons, I overtook the blind M.P., Fawcett, who was then Postmaster-General. We were privately very good friends, though we often had crossed swords over Indian subjects, and he at once said to me: "I was very sorry to see how ill Lord Beaconsfield is." (Blind people often sub-

stitute "see" for "hear.") I said in reply : "How do you know this?" He replied : "Oh, through his voice : it is the voice of a sick man, and what a beautiful voice it is—the finest I ever heard." "Do you mean to say that he has a finer voice than Gladstone, Bright, or the Duke of Argyll?" "Oh yes, no comparison ; you can hear every syllable. John Stuart Mill told me that one of the charms of the House of Commons was Disraeli's voice, and I agree with him." I was surprised, for Disraeli's voice, though strong, always seemed to me to be somewhat harsh and metallic in its inflexions, and wanting the warmth and variation of intonation of the others. But a blind man on such a question must be a better judge.

In a few days Fawcett's prediction was verified. Beaconsfield became seriously ill, and after a comparatively short attack of bronchitis he died.

His death evoked wide and universal sympathy. Rarely, if ever, in political history had the disregarded warnings of a great statesman been so suddenly verified. The thinking portion of the electorate—no matter to what party they belonged—now knew that the last election had unjustly condemned Lord Beaconsfield and unwisely swept his Government from office.

A short time before his death I had occasion to see him in company with Sir William Hart Dyke. He gave us a short but very succinct account of the perils ahead and how they could have been dealt with, and then he bitterly criticised the vanity of the one man who, in his judgment, was the primary cause of our encircling

difficulties. As usual, his wonderful prescience was not at fault, and the sessions of 1881 to 1885 confirmed his pessimistic predictions.

To me his death was an irremediable loss. No one could take his place so far as I was concerned, and though in subsequent Governments I had much to be thankful for from the consideration and kindness shown me by my Chief, we were never on quite the same plane of relationship as that on which Lord Beaconsfield had placed himself and me.

To fill the leadership thus vacated a curious arrangement was made. Salisbury and Northcote were combined in joint authority, each being leader in his respective House. It was a clumsy but, on the whole, the best arrangement under the existing circumstances.

Northcote was then beginning to experience the effects of a heart disease which a few years later so tragically laid him dead on the threshold of Lord Salisbury's official room. This physical weakness showed itself intermittently, and on more than one occasion I have seen him, when on the Front Bench in the House of Commons or in council, gradually turning greyer and greyer until one feared a total collapse. He would then slowly resume a more normal colour and apparently be quite himself again in a few minutes. But these intermittent attacks seemed to rob him of much of his vitality and to deprive him of the power of taking a bold initiative either in debate or in tactics. This gave Randolph Churchill his opportunity, of which he made the fullest use, for the virulence of his attacks upon the Government

was fully equalled by the impertinence with which he treated Northcote.

Churchill was a curious compound of humanity. I did not then know him as well as I subsequently did. He was an amalgam. On the one side he was a genius, on the other a spoilt and naughty child ; but in either capacity he always trampled on the weak and irresolute. His relations with our Front Bench were far from pleasant, and as he rose in popularity so he became more dictatorial and unreasonable. Those who, like myself, were anxious to keep the party together and had a sense of loyalty and regard for Northcote found ourselves not unfrequently in very difficult positions. Provided he could embarrass the Government, the after-effect of his action was of little concern to him, and the problem almost daily occurred of trying to combine effective party action in the House of Commons without subsequently damaging outside the House of Commons the reputation and standing of the attacking party.

"Tory democracy" just then became a popular cry with some of our stalwart go-aheads, but what it meant was never clear ; but it did annoy and alienate a large proportion of our best and, in ordinary circumstances, most reliable supporters. Still, it must be admitted that Churchill's actions and speeches, impolitic and risky as they often were, did much to rehabilitate the Tory Party as a fighting organisation and a living force, and the full effect of his work and of those acting with him was clearly shown in the general election of 1885, when on the new

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register the Tory Party came back in numbers wholly beyond the calculation of our opponents. This unexpected exhibition of political strength had, as I shall subsequently prove, no small influence upon Gladstone and a section of the Radical Party, by inducing them to become Home Rulers.

The Irish Land Bill introduced by the Government was founded on the three "F's," which, being interpreted, meant Fair Rents, Fixity of Tenure, Free Sale. These demands had for some time past been put forward by the most advanced Irish Land Reformers, and in the Land Bill of 1870 Mr. Gladstone on more than one occasion went out of his way to denounce these demands and to maintain that the legislation he was then proposing would be a permanent barrier to their enforcement.

The ordinary Minister with such a record around his neck would have felt some compunction and shame at being thus publicly forced to admit that in his previous diagnosis of the question upon which he was now proposing extreme legislation he had been wholly wrong. Not so Gladstone. In his most commanding and confident tones he insinuated that what he was now proposing was the natural consequence of what he repudiated before. It is only just to him to say that he did try in subsequent debates to be fair between the contending interests of landlord and tenant, so far as it was possible to be so, and at the same time to adhere to the main principles of his Bill. It may be worth a word or two to explain the genesis of the three "F's."

In Ireland, particularly on tillage farms, the majority of which are small in acreage, the great proportion, if not the whole, of the improvements are effected by the tenants. No estate could stand the annual charge of such outgoings, and from a rental point of view it would be better to consolidate the holdings and thus secure less outgoings and a larger net rental. In Ulster, landlord and tenant are in many localities of Scottish extraction, for both came over together to Ireland, and by joint action subsequently secured the cultivation of the soil. In order to give a tenant vacating a farm remuneration for his improvements, he was in Ulster allowed by his landlord to sell the right of occupation upon his vacated farm. The value of this right of occupation was largely regulated by the amount of the rent and the length of conditions of tenure. The demand for free sale naturally associated itself with fair rents and fixity of tenure, and a fair rent meant fixing the rent by an outside authority and not by bargaining between the landlord and tenant. "Tenant right," as free sale in the north of Ireland is called, attained in many places to very large dimensions. I know estates where a sitting tenant obtained for his tenant right from the incoming tenant a sum equivalent to forty or even fifty years' rent of the farm. These were fancy prices, but they sent up the value of tenant right everywhere.

The Government Bill, as originally prepared, took the commercial value of the farm, that is, its total letting value including improvements, and then deducted tenant right from it, leaving

the balance to the landlord. In many cases this would have been a minus quantity for the owner of the land, especially in those estates where, in consequence of rents being low and the conditions of tenure easy, tenant right was exceptionally high.

I turned over in my mind what phrase or words I could use to bring home to Gladstone, who was in charge of the Bill, the palpable injustice of such a legislative enactment, and it occurred to me that the expression, "In Ireland two halves do not equal but exceed the whole," would figuratively bring out in an unmistakable manner the impracticability of the scheme. Gladstone was greatly taken by my expression that the two halves of the landlord's and tenant's interests in a holding exceeded its whole value. He thanked me for it, he withdrew that part of the Bill to which I had objected, and he so subsequently altered it as to meet this part of my objection.

The weak executive part of this legislation was the stamp of man who, as Sub-Commissioner, was appointed to fix, or rather to cut down, rents. Few, if any, of them had any judicial training or legal knowledge. The whole atmosphere and environment of their courts were impregnated with a partiality for the tenant. The Sub-Commissioner was only appointed for a limited period ; the more work he could create the greater the likelihood of continuous employment, and the more he reduced rents the more tenants would apply to his court. Gladstone was not altogether to blame for the status and qualifications of these

officials. Originally, he gave this work to the County Court Judges, who, whatever may be their failings, at least sit judicially and have some knowledge of law. A prominent Irish landlord in the House of Lords, whose County Court Judge had a vendetta against him, persuaded that assembly to substitute for the County Court Judge Special Sub-Commissioners. From the landlord point of view, this change was a fatal mistake. Irishmen have many great and charming attributes, but a judicial temperament is the last thing they provide. Even with legal training, they occasionally become partisans; without it they are as helpless as a mariner upon the wide ocean without compasses or charts. The moment the Legislature grasped the idea of divided ownership in land and endeavoured to give effect to it by the so-called "judicial rents," such rents ought to have been the stepping-stone leading to schemes of wholesale purchase under which a wholesome sense of undivided ownership could once more be re-established. Wherever the contrary idea prevails, divided or dual ownership will result in the "two halves exceeding the whole," and woe to the owner of the unpopular half.

This Bill, when it got to the Lords, was the subject of much animadversion, and a large party was there in favour of throwing it out. My father, who had twice been Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland and was, in addition, a large Irish landowner, exercised a somewhat exceptional influence in Irish matters. He was strongly in favour of passing the Bill with certain amendments. He

was a just and tolerant man, and, recognising the exertions the Government were now making to re-establish law and order and the authority of the executive in Ireland, he did not like to aggravate their task by throwing out a Bill which, even if it did mulct the landlords, would facilitate the restoration of order.

Gladstone showed exceptional skill in handling the Lords' amendments, always keeping the Bill alive even when refusing their amendments, and he succeeded ultimately in placing the Bill on the Statute Book without very material alterations to the shape in which he had originally introduced it. It was his own begotten legislative child, he was very proud of it, and punishment awaited—as Irish Members subsequently found out—anyone who ventured to lay sacrilegious hands upon its free working.

After the conclusion of the session, Parnell continued his agitation in Ireland, and he and other prominent members of the Land League denounced the recent land legislation and tried to aggravate the situation by preventing tenants from having recourse to the provisions of the new Land Act. This was too much for Gladstone. He consented to the arrest of Parnell, defending that action in a superb oratorical speech at Leeds, in which he denounced him as "marching through rapine to the dismemberment of the Empire." The Land League was dissolved, and some hundreds of its most prominent members were imprisoned, including Parnell, Dillon, and O'Kelly. Yet outrage did not cease, and though at the close of the year the executive authority of the

Irish Government was re-established over the greater part of Ireland, its inability in large districts to protect private individuals and property from murder and outrage was painfully apparent.

CHAPTER XVIII

Session of 1882—Crime rampant in Ireland—The Bradlaugh case—Rules of procedure in Commons—Their futility—Difficulty of reform—Changes made—Intrigue against Forster—His resignation—Kilmainham Treaty between Government and Parnell—His release—Debate in Commons—Murder of Cavendish and Burke—Frederick Lambton—Parnell's general attitude—Dynamite outrages.

THE session of 1882 opened under conditions of failure and depression for the Government.

Though nearly a thousand persons were imprisoned in Ireland under the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act, murder and outrage had not been restrained, and the existing coercive powers terminated on 30th September.

In Egypt affairs were rapidly drifting to a position where Great Britain must either assert her responsibility by the exercise of force, or by retirement subject all European residents in that country to outrage and possibly massacre.

The rules of the House of Commons, though strengthened, had failed to prevent the outrageous and continuous misuse of the so-called right of free speech by Parnellite Members. At the last election the most popular and highly applauded dictum directed against Lord Beaconsfield's Government was : " Force is no remedy." Unless anarchy were to prevail, both at home and abroad, a full and unprecedented exercise of this " hateful expedient " was urgently necessary. Yet the

millennium predicted in the Midlothian campaign by the overthrow of Beaconsfield had only been twenty months in existence. But right athwart and in the middle of all these troubles was a curious Parliamentary difficulty that for some years alike embarrassed the House of Commons and made the Government look ridiculous.

It arose out of a very small and simple question—was Bradlaugh, the well-known atheist, to be allowed to qualify himself for Parliamentary duties by taking the prescribed oath of allegiance? For years this question dragged on under various phases and changes, constantly upsetting the Government programme of work, cropping up where it was least expected, and ultimately so operating as to subject the Government to defeat and ignominy. The twists, turns, and ramifications which enveloped this controversy have now little interest for the public. The two contributing causes to the prolongation and acerbation of the dispute were Bradlaugh's clumsy mismanagement of his own case, and the skill, ability, and assurance with which Churchill pounced upon every mistake made by Bradlaugh and the Government. Bradlaugh, after having publicly asserted that the oath was an absurd and meaningless formula, tried to take it. If he had held his tongue, no one would have objected to his thus qualifying himself. The Government later on brought in an Affirmation Bill to get him and them out of the difficulty, but they were beaten by a small majority of three on the second reading. Churchill's speech on the occasion was admitted, even by his critics, to be one of extraordinary brilliancy, research, and

accuracy. He after this performance established a reputation of powers of speech and controversy second only to Gladstone himself, and upon the reputation he had thus made he became even more contemptuous than before in his treatment of his own Front Bench.

Bradlaugh, so soon as he became a full-blown Member of Parliament, also developed a remarkable power of speech. On all subjects disconnected with religion, he showed himself a fair and able debater, and his premature demise was a public misfortune, for no man took a sounder or broader view than he did of the evils of the modern industrial theories by which restrictions were placed upon output and individual effort, and no one could on such topics speak with greater authority or knowledge.

The Government put in the forefront of their programme the revision of the existing rules of the House of Commons. These rules tightened up the powers of terminating debate, but the failure hitherto of the Government to assert its authority as an executive body, and distrust of Gladstone's ulterior motives and policy, made many reluctant to give to so unstable and unreliable a Premier increased powers of silencing his opponents in Parliament. Ultimately, the rules were carried, but at the adjournment for Easter only one clause of the first proposal had been carried. When the rules were passed in the autumn session, the Speaker was wholly dissociated from initiating the Closure. That power was given, as it should be, to the Government.

I have spent so many years of my life in the

House of Commons that I may be pardoned if for a short time I dissert upon what is the fundamental difficulty of so revising the rules and procedure of that assembly as to bring them in accordance with common sense and the practice of other legislative bodies.

The House of Commons is numerically far too large for the purposes of debate or legislation. The chamber of the House itself, including the accommodation of the galleries, from which Members cannot speak, will barely contain half its number. The hours are far longer than those prevailing in any other assembly, yet the amount of legislative business transacted in those longer hours is comparatively small. Any Member can put any number of questions to Ministers, no matter how meticulous or unwise they may be. Every opportunity is given to multiply the powers of speech of individual Members, and to such an extent has this multiplication of facilities grown that on money Bills, independent of the unlimited power of speaking in Committees, every Member has the power of making, if he chooses, on seven different occasions, the same speech over and over again. On ordinary Bills a lesser but similar verbosity can be exercised. The brazen-faced advertiser, of whom there is always a number in each Parliament, soon finds out that the House of Commons is the best advertising-board in the world. Men "on the make" remorselessly make use of the opportunities thus afforded them. A very large proportion of the questions put and motions made are of no public use whatever. They are mere personal advertisements. I can truly say

that for the last ten years of my Parliamentary life a vast proportion of the hours which I spent inside the Chamber was sheer waste of time. There are many good speakers left, but on an ordinary debate or on the Estimates you will hear an immense deal of trash. All the abler and more sensible Members of Parliament are fully aware of this. Why, then, it may be asked, do they not combine in so improving the procedure as to make the House of Commons respected out of doors and an institution entrance into which should be the primary ambition of able and patriotic men ?

The almost unlimited power of talking which the present procedure encourages must be associated with another evil—the lack of a written constitution. A favourite conclusion of a political peroration is an allusion to our “glorious constitution” ; but we have no constitution. There was a vague misty idea that our constitution was based upon a judicious blending of the authority of King, Lords, and Commons. The power of the Monarchy is now by usage so restricted that although the humblest of his Ministers may publicly talk by the yard about anything, he, the King, must not say or do anything that has not previously had the imprimatur of the Cabinet upon it. The Parliament Act has practically pushed the Lords, so far as legislation is concerned, into a position of permanent inferiority. The Commons alone remain ; but even there independence of thought and action is on the wane, and with the caucus and the present system of party discipline a temporary majority is often absolute. They can, on their own authority and

without appeal to the country, abolish everything and set up nothing or anything they choose in its place. In all written constitutions there are certain organic laws or institutions which cannot be abolished by a bare majority, and in many constitutions popular confirmation of any important change is further required. It is the knowledge of the absolute powerlessness of a minority, and especially of a Conservative minority, in the House of Commons which makes so many Members of Parliament loth to part with existing rules of procedure. They admit that they are abused, that they encourage self-advertisement, and at times make life in the Lower Chamber almost unendurable; but they think and say: "We may each of us some day be compelled to have recourse to these methods of obstruction when some vital principle in which we believe is to be destroyed, or some necessary protection is to be taken from us without adequate discussion or an appeal to the electorate." There is practical common sense based on past experience in this attitude of opposition to drastic changes of procedure in the House of Commons. The popularity and hustling force of a democratic Government rapidly wane. Over and over again in my own experience Bills proposing great changes have been introduced, talk has postponed them from session to session, each session has weakened the motive power behind them, and they have ultimately died of inanition.

To give us a written constitution would be a stupendous constructive performance. It can only be effected by a political genius utilising

a political upheaval: both must synchronise. I therefore fear that the House of Commons may for long be debased and made to look ridiculous by its unworkable procedure. In my judgment, the reform of the rules and procedure of the House of Commons is by far the most pressing and urgent political question of the day. Men of ability, understanding, and character will not become candidates for a legislature where they know that, under existing conditions, they will have little to do but to loaf and vote. A well-known Member of Parliament who has made himself an authority upon personal questions of this kind told me the result of his experience upon this point. He said that he had not met a single Member of Parliament who, having achieved success outside politics, and being in consequence induced to enter the House of Commons, did not soon regret the political venture he had made. When asked for the reason, he replied: "The procedure and intolerable waste of time under it."

Under the present rules the aggregate ability and capacity of the House of Commons must continuously deteriorate, and it is a sad reflection to know that the destiny of the British Empire is in the hands of an authority which, so long as it declines to alter its methods, will continue to be on the downward grade.

The outcome of the long debates upon the reformed procedure was the establishment of Grand Committees to which Bills of importance after a second reading could be sent, and a power to conclude a debate by a motion made by a Minister, supported subsequently by a majority

of three to one. The Speaker and the Chairman also had power to suspend Members guilty of continuous and violent obstruction. Dr. Playfair, the Chairman of Ways and Means, upon one occasion after an all-night sitting, on resuming the chair in the morning, was in such a hurry to suspend Members that he read out a long list of names in alphabetical order whom he accused of obstruction during his absence ; but, unfortunately, one or two so named had not been in the House during the whole night.

It became evident a few days after debates began on the state of Ireland that Forster was not supported by all his colleagues. He struggled manfully against these intrigues, but the *Pall Mall* newspaper (then under the trenchant editorship of John Morley) took every opportunity of questioning the wisdom of his course of action. These criticisms were approved by some of Forster's colleagues, and it was open gossip in the lobby that there was a cabal on the Ministerial side against him. Up to Easter there was no overt action taken by these dissentients, but soon afterwards the political public were amazed to hear of the resignation of Lord Cowper and Forster, the Lord-Lieutenant and Secretary of Ireland, and of their replacement by Lord Spencer and Lord Frederick Cavendish.

A short time previously, Parnell had been let out of prison for a few days on a kind of parole, and he utilised his freedom to enter into a bargain with the Government which has always since been known as the "Kilmainham Treaty."

The recent publication of the book, *Charles*

Stewart Parnell, by Mrs. O'Shea, throws a strong—and I believe a correct—light upon the transactions which led to this extraordinary bargain ; for although the lady's unsupported statements have to be accepted with reserve, the letters to and fro between Parnell and her are unquestioned. These letters themselves confirm much of the talk then prevalent in the lobby. One of these letters shows his real opinion upon the Land League movement, which he had originated, and suggests the reasons why he agreed, when he came out of prison, to the historical Kilmainham Treaty. He speaks with utter contempt of the movement of which he was the head :

“ I cannot describe to you the disgust I always felt for these platform meetings. I knew how hollow everything connected with the movement was. When I was arrested I did not think that the movement could have survived a month, but this wretched Government has managed to keep things going in several of the counties up till now. Next month, when the seeding season comes, will probably see the end of all things and our speedy release.”

Throughout all his correspondence Parnell remained certain that he would soon be released. Was the release to be conditional or unconditional? If unconditional, he undoubtedly would gain in popularity with the extremists of his party, but he was not in sympathy with them and was afraid of them. Those who have closely studied his career will accept as correct this statement :

“ In his seeking for a weapon to use for the

betterment of England's government of Ireland, Parnell had discovered the undying force of hate, and, using the influence of his personality, he strove to direct it into the service of the Ireland he loved. But he afterwards stood appalled at the intensity of the passion he had loosed."

If, on the other hand, he accepted conditions from the Government, he might utilise the conditions thus obtained in strengthening the moderate section of his party, and thus impose some check upon the extremists and their work of outrage.

Mrs. O'Shea threw the whole weight of her influence upon the side of moderation, and she won, but Parnell thus summarised his future position towards the extremists :

" Yes, I hold them now with my back to the wall, but if I turn to the Government I turn my back on them, and then—— ? "

It was noticed by habitués of the House of Commons that after 1882 not only was Parnell armed, but he at times wore a coat of mail.

The Treaty of Kilmainham was bitterly criticised at the time it became public property, and the retirement of Lord Cowper and Forster from the Government of Ireland accentuated the censure. It was further negotiated under such conditions that the Government were in the awkward position of being unable to give a true and full account of its genesis. Captain O'Shea always claimed to be its author, and for the rest of his life put forward on that ground exorbitant claims for office and party recognition.

When the correspondence between O'Shea and Parnell was read out by the former in a debate, he omitted a phrase at the end of a letter in which Parnell undertook to support the Government if his conditions were complied with. Forster, who had a full copy of his letter in his hand, jumped up and pointed out that this vital sentence had been omitted. A scene of great excitement and confusion followed, which deepened the general impression that the bargain arrived at was a shady and disreputable political transaction. There was another passage in the letter in which Parnell stated that, if let out, he would utilise a certain unnamed individual to stop outrages in the west of Ireland. This was at once fastened upon by Forster as indicating the establishment of relations between the Government and those promoting crime and outrage, and the utilisation of the latter for the purpose of promoting law and order. An intensity of passion and a dramatic interest was given to these debates by the assassination of Lord Frederick Cavendish and Mr. Burke in the Phoenix Park on the very day on which Lord Spencer had made a triumphant entry into Dublin.

There were two theories prevailing concerning this assassination. The first was that the extreme men, disliking Parnell's negotiations with the Government, had committed this outrage to discredit him personally. But the other—and I believe the correct—view, was that the assassination of Burke had been planned a long time back by a gang that were outside any organisation connected with Parnell. They saw their oppor-

was the chief actor. All the Lambton family are fearless, and they have associated with this quality a singular power of curt and incisive speech. The Government intended in their original Bill to have power to make night searches, and they proposed—for no reason except to conciliate the Irishmen—to give up this power which, in the opinion of the judicial and constabulary authorities, was most important for the detection and prevention of crime. A number of Whigs, of whom Lambton was one, met that day and determined to oppose the proposal to exclude these powers from the Bill. After one or two of this dissentient body had spoken, Gladstone arose, and in his most imperative Parliamentary manner informed the recalcitrants that if they did not take care they might force him to resign—a threat which he considered, and which generally was, sufficient to cow into submission anyone sitting on the Liberal side. To his amazement, a slim young gentleman arose immediately behind the Treasury Bench and made a short speech which had, I think, the most startling effect that I can ever recollect any young member creating in the House of Commons. The substance of the speech was to this effect—that he had listened with astonishment to the utterances of the Prime Minister, he had been brought up all his life as a Radical, he understood that the Ministry were the servants and not the masters of the House of Commons, and he added that if, as was clear from the debate, there was not sufficient justification for striking out these powers, then he hoped that all his friends would vote according to their

conscience, and if the Prime Minister did resign it would be very easy to get someone else to take his place.

I have never seen Gladstone so taken aback. The Irishmen were then for some inscrutable reason at loggerheads with the Government, and they determined not to participate in the division on this question ; but they were sitting up in the gallery laughing at the rebuff which Gladstone got from his young follower. It is only fair to Gladstone to say that, when he recovered from his astonishment, he showed, in subsequent days, no particular animosity against the young man who not only defied him in the House of Commons but succeeded in defeating the Government by a majority in the division which ensued.

Upon that division Gladstone did not resign. Lambton has since on many occasions shown his political courage and ability in adhering to what he believed to be right, regardless of the pressure either of wire-pullers or Whips.

Parnell's attitude towards the extremists of his party became more defined after the passing of the Coercion Bill in 1882. By breaking with the Government and attacking them for their continued policy of coercion, he, to some extent, rehabilitated himself with the more advanced sections of his party. There ensued in the following two years a series of dynamite outrages. Attacks were made on public buildings, and two bombs were deposited in the House of Commons, one of which did considerable damage inside the Chamber, and the other made a hole in Westminster Hall. The Government at once brought

in a Bill dealing with explosive substances of a very strong character. The Irish Members did not in any way oppose this legislation, which passed through all its stages in one night.

I myself have always believed that Parnell was disinclined to outrage and violence. Though brave, he undoubtedly was afraid of assassination. The extraordinary secrecy which surrounded his movements, and the inability of anybody to ascertain his address, justify this belief. His policy was much more dictated by hatred of England than love of Ireland. He was an aristocrat by instinct, and the stronger he became the more haughty and stand-off was his attitude towards his followers. To those with whom he came in personal political contact he will always be an enigma. He was the very essence of concentration and determination ; but I have always felt that, although he was no doubt morally guilty of an infraction of the Decalogue by his relations with Mrs. O'Shea, his extraordinary affection for her, the protection which he invariably gave her, and the utter subordination of everything political to what was for her benefit, show that there was an element of great tenderness in his character.

CHAPTER XIX

Egyptian trouble — Dilke — Military revolt — Gambetta's fall
— Bombardment of Alexandria — Victory of Tel-el-Kebir —
Government decline responsibility for government in Egypt
— Consequences.

IN the meantime, Egyptian affairs were getting into a terrible muddle. Sir Charles Dilke was Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, and he exercised a much greater influence in his Department than an ordinary Under-Secretary, he being a considerable political power outside. He came into Parliament the same year as I did, and from the first he posed as a very advanced Radical. Though an able man, he was not in the first flight of the intellectuals. He was very modern, full of bustle and go, a born lobbyist, and he also revelled in all the details of party wire-pulling. He was most industrious, and he had a craze for picking up masses of meticulous information, which he used to parade with some pretension when speaking. Though the substance of his speeches was good and knowledgeable, his monotonous delivery and the total lack of brilliancy or originality in his phraseology prevented him from being an attractive or effective speaker.

Dilke had travelled much in France and was desirous of establishing good relations between the two countries. Moreover, he was a friend

of Gambetta. Gambetta became Prime Minister of France, and in that position exercised for the moment a supreme influence in France. Gambetta's ideas inclined towards Free Trade, and a commercial treaty between the two countries on those lines was then on the tapis, and Gladstone and his Government were very anxious to bring these negotiations to a successful conclusion. Gambetta, on the other hand, was desirous of bringing Great Britain into Egyptian affairs, so that the two nations should exercise a joint control over the country. By securing British co-operation, he believed he would protect France against German or other outside influence, so a kind of compromise was arranged. We agreed to become part of the joint control, and in return we were to get a commercial treaty on more or less Free Trade lines. As a result, and to give effect to the first half of the agreement, the French and British fleets cruised outside Alexandria.

Inside Egypt a military revolution was being developed. Arabi Pasha, an indigenous Egyptian Colonel, was put forward by a clique of military officers as the head of a national and military movement against foreign tutelage and interference. The movement rapidly grew, undermining the Khedive's authority and that of the English and French representatives. Just before a climax in the movement was reached, there was a great military review in Cairo. The Khedive was present, and Arabi Pasha was in command of the Egyptian troops. Our representative was Sir Auckland Colvin, a distinguished member of a well-known Anglo-Indian family. He tried to

persuade the Khedive, when Arabi Pasha came up and saluted him in the face of the whole Army, to take his sword from him and have him arrested by members of the Egyptian staff. Sir Auckland believed that any such indication of authority in the face of the Army would have at once rehabilitated the Khedive's authority and have effaced Arabi. But the Khedive's nerves were unequal to such an exhibition of determination. The opportunity was lost, and a short time afterwards riots broke out throughout the country, those occurring in Alexandria being of a most serious character and resulting in the slaughter and pillage of many Europeans. Interference in Egypt for the protection of the lives of Europeans and of the immense material and pecuniary interests of the Great Powers became an imperative necessity.

In the meantime, by one of those unaccountable political intrigues which have so recently occurred in France, Gambetta had been driven from office. He was succeeded by de Freycinet, who was a timid man and averse to any external enterprise which would lock up any considerable part of the French Army or Navy. He withdrew the French fleet from Egyptian waters, and he did not countenance further negotiations in connection with the commercial treaty.

Gladstone and Granville thus found themselves in such a mess that, contrary as it was to their character, policy, and instincts to embark in any forcible foreign enterprise, they had no alternative but to order the British fleet to bombard Alexandria. Gladstone attempted to justify

the bombardment as an "act of self-defence"; but Bright declined to be thus humbugged, and he left the Government.

The bombardment of Alexandria was only the preliminary step in the warlike operations which the British Government had to conduct in Egypt. An expeditionary force was organised, composed partly of British and partly of Indian troops under Lord Wolseley, and a large vote of credit had to be taken to defray the expenditure of this expedition. The Conservative Party, in assenting to this expedition and in supporting the Government in a course which they did not approve, could not help making a few references to the Midlothian campaign, especially as the troops of the expeditionary force were, to a large extent, composed of Indian troops, whose employment a few years back by Lord Beaconsfield was the subject of universal censure and condemnation by the Radical politicians and the Radical Press.

The expedition under the able leadership of Wolseley won the battle of Tel-el-Kebir, and, in consequence, the British Government became the *de facto* Government of Egypt. But Gladstone and Granville would not face the responsibilities of their position, and the former by every available subterfuge of speech attempted to shift from his Government the exercise of the duties thus entailed upon them. This extraordinary ineptitude to face and provide for unpleasant realities was the primary cause, as I shall subsequently show, of the destruction of Hicks Pasha and his whole army, the capture by the Mahdi of Khartoum,

the death of Gordon, and the establishment for a decade and a half of the intolerable tyranny of the Mahdi over the inhabitants of the Soudan. When ultimately freed by British arms from the Mahdi's yoke, so pulverised and crushed had the population of that vast territory become that it only numbered one quarter of its previous inhabitants some fifteen years back. This fact is in itself a good comment on Mr. Gladstone's contention that it would be "blood-guiltiness" to interfere with a "people who were struggling to be free."

Thus the year and the session of 1882 ended, and another annual record brought home to the minds of every thinking voter in the country the irreconcilable difference between Gladstone's performances as a Minister and his election predictions not two years old.

CHAPTER XX

Government in trouble all over the world—Forster's attack—Parnell and his characteristic reply—Dynamite outrages—Explosives Bill—Irish Land Act working badly—Motion on Land Purchase—Its acceptance—Arrest and trial of Irish Invincibles.

THE year 1883 opened ominously for the administration. Gambetta suddenly succumbed to some mysterious illness, and by his death the only powerful supporter in France of united action with England in Egypt disappeared. Egypt was rapidly dropping into a condition of chaos owing to the inability of the English Government to recognise their responsibility.

In the Transvaal unrest approaching almost to armed resistance against any recognition of British authority was developing and assuming solidarity.

Our relations with Foreign Powers were most unsatisfactory, and Prince Bismarck was open-mouthed as to the impossibility of doing business with party politicians such as Gladstone and Granville.

Gladstone was ill in the South of France, and the leadership devolved upon Hartington during his absence. The Radical Party endeavoured to distract public attention from the fiasco of their external policy by promising a number of internal reforms. The county franchise was to be reduced

and a new legislative principle was to be introduced as regards compensation to agricultural tenants, and a complete reorganisation of the administrative system in vogue in the Metropolis was also announced. These new measures were only dangled before Parliament and the public, as the "remanets" from previous sessions, in addition to a Bankruptcy Bill, were more than enough to take up the available time in the session for legislation.

Ireland again came to the front, and fresh developments there occupied much time in the House of Commons. On the Address, Forster, the late Irish Secretary, made a very powerful and effective personal attack on Parnell. The speech was carefully composed and indisputably proved the complicity of the Land League (of which Parnell was the head) with the promotion and perpetration of outrages and crime in Ireland. Forster ended his indictment by saying that until Parnell cleared himself from these charges he declined to be associated in any way with him, politically or otherwise. The speech, though primarily directed against Parnell, was inferentially a most damaging arraignment of the Kilmainham Treaty made by the Government in the year preceding.

Parnell treated this attack on his probity and honour with callous indifference. It was with great difficulty he was induced to reply, but when he did he made no attempt to disprove Forster's allegations. He started off by saying that he did not care a straw about English opinion, that the House of Commons was a packed jury hostile to

him, whose prejudices he would not even attempt to counteract. He then indulged in a venomous invective against his accuser, and sat down amidst the cheers of his followers. It was a very clever reply under the circumstances, though it angered the Radical Members. It kept along that indeterminate line between approval and condemnation of crime to which Parnell always adhered. His life was in danger from the Irish extremists, and he would not irritate them further by a denunciation of their misdeeds. On the other hand, he did not wish entirely to lose the goodwill of the Radicals, whose votes at times were useful to him; but he knew that the origin and source of his Parliamentary strength came from Ireland and the Irish in Great Britain, and he would not say or do anything which would in any way weaken his hold over their votes and organisation, even when his personal character was impugned.

About this time the Irish American anarchists were much in evidence. Nitro-glycerine and other high explosives had given them new methods of waging warfare upon the civil populations with whom they were at variance. Bombs were placed against the Local Government Board and the *Times* office, two were brought by visitors to the House of Commons; one exploded in Westminster Hall and another in the House itself—fortunately when the Commons was not in session. Attempts were also made to blow up railway stations and other places of public resort. Evidence was obtained of the existence of a widespread organisation both for the manufacture

of high explosives and their distribution and allocation for outrage and murder.

The Home Office was thoroughly alarmed, Cabinet Ministers moved about under protection, and elaborate precautions were taken for the defence of public buildings and high officials. An "Explosives Bill," dealing drastically with all who were connected with the manufacture or distribution of certain explosives, was passed through all its stages in one sitting and became operative next day. This particular phase of outrage collapsed almost as suddenly as it came into existence, but a number of the miscreants connected with it were captured and sentenced to heavy terms of imprisonment.

The Parnellite Members of Parliament did not oppose the Explosives Bill. Parnell thus expressed tacit disapproval of the bomb outrages, but, on the other hand, by his speech on Forster's motion, he maintained his hold over the Land League and their actions by abstaining from any public disapproval of their misdeeds. This delicate game of see-saw tactics he persistently pursued. It required a man of the nicest perception, combined with absolute indifference to the atmosphere of opinion around him so to meander, though I believe that if he did, under what he considered political expediency, condoned outrage, he personally disapproved of and dreaded such methods of violence.

Later on in the session I had unexpected but very clear evidence of Parnell's constructive foresight by his intervention in a debate which I originated upon Land Purchase in Ireland.

The Land Act of 1881 was not working fairly. Its whole tendency was in the direction of spoliating the owners of land for the benefit of the temporary occupiers. Rents were in certain cases ruthlessly reduced by the Land Sub-Commissioners, and there was an inequality in these reductions between areas whose conditions were practically the same which caused very great discontent amongst landlords as well as tenants. The whole atmosphere and surrounding of the Land Commissioners Courts was one of partiality to the occupiers. They stood in relation to the landlords in the proportion of about a hundred to one, and under the doctrine that the interests of the majority must always be primarily considered, the landlord under this form of litigation occupied a very secondary position. Attention was called in Parliament to certain more flagrantly unjust decisions, and a Committee of Enquiry was appointed by the Lords.

When a question becomes one of antagonism between political parties, and the subject in dispute is based on the results of a recent Act of Parliament passed by the Government in office, no judicial determination is likely or even possible. In my judgment, the land question was and had been the foundation of Irish discontent and disturbance. The disproportion of those owning and occupying land was very great—in itself a source of social and economic weakness. The vast majority of the landowners were Protestants, whilst the overwhelming number of the tenants were Catholics. The Protestants were most, if not all, of Scottish or English extraction, the

tenants Irish and in many counties pure Celts. The title-deeds of a large proportion of the landlords were derived from conquest and confiscation. Thus, in this so-called land question, you have concentrated in the most acute and intense form the unfathomable jealousy, friction, and hatred arising out of conflict of race, religion, and proprietary rights. The dispute had in one shape or another existed for centuries, and in Ulster alone—or rather in those parts of it where owner and occupier were of the same race and religion—had quiet and good relations prevailed. It was essential for the future peace and development of Ireland that some step should be taken to terminate this internecine warfare, which was carried on now under the veneer of legality, but with much the same bitterness and mutual antipathy as had prevailed previous to the recent legislation. The remedy undoubtedly was purchase by the tenants, under which they became owner as well as occupier.

Gladstone throughout his Irish legislation always gave the cold shoulder to purchase. He detested all legislation which in any way added to the financial responsibilities of the Treasury. To cut down all financial expenditure and exclude the State from entering into any financial obligations outside the cost of indispensable administration were the two primary objects of his financial policy. National expenditure was devised, not to benefit the nation, but to afford the Chancellor of the Exchequer an annual opportunity of self-glorification by the reduction of taxation and disbursements. Bright, on the other hand, took

a much more statesmanlike and wider view. The purchase clauses in past Irish Land Acts were his children, but being foster-children they were not well nourished by Gladstone.

My object was to frame a big scheme of land purchase upon lines which would meet Gladstone's objections. I tried to base my scheme on Irish County Finance or deposits in Irish Banks. By Banks I included all institutions accepting and paying interest on deposits. I consulted several friends, including Arthur Balfour, and they all went so far as to say that my scheme might legitimately be brought forward, as it was watertight and would effectively withstand serious criticism. I therefore put down the following notice :

"That, in the opinion of this House, an immediate revision of the Purchase Clauses of the Irish Land Act, 1881, is necessary in order to give effect to the intentions of Parliament contained therein."

The motion came forward at a convenient sitting at nine o'clock on the 12th June. There were few Members present when I got up to speak, but a few minutes later, on turning round, I saw Parnell surrounded by his followers closely listening to my proposals. He took an early opportunity of intervening in the debate, and without pledging himself to the details of my scheme gave his hearty support to the principles of my speech. In the debate which followed, no one, except George Trevelyan—then Chief Secretary for Ireland—and Gladstone, spoke against my motion. The feeling in every part of the House was so strong in its favour that Gladstone gave way

and accepted my motion, substituting the word "early" for "immediate." The Radical Press accused me of coquetting with Home Rule and Parnell by bringing this motion forward. As a matter of fact, I had no communication whatsoever with Parnell or his party before I spoke. I was a consistent opponent of Home Rule, and my father and family had also thrown all their strength and influence against it. Parnell supported my motion simply because he foresaw that the principle which it embodied would be beneficial to Ireland, and substitute, so far as the tenure of land was concerned, unity and peace in the place of the perpetual discord and warfare of the past.

I looked upon this evening and its result as my greatest Parliamentary success. Little notice was taken either by the public or the Press of this debate, but it was the foundation and main-spring of all the subsequent development of land purchase in Ireland. The Conservative Government two years later brought in what was called "Ashbourne's Land Act"—a purchase scheme which was accepted on all sides; and a succession of larger Acts, culminating with the Wyndham Act of 1904, have now established right throughout Ireland on an immense scale the salutary principle of undivided ownership of land by the purchase of the landlords' rights.

I published my speech with a short epitome as a preface. Without aspiring to be a prophet, I think its prediction has been more than realised. I said :

"It is too late now to draw back from or

ignore the consequences of the Land Act of 1881. A dual ownership in property hitherto indivisible has, by that law, been established throughout Ireland; and the State has undertaken every fifteen years to revise and reconcile the respective claims and rights of all owners and occupiers of land in Ireland. Such a task speaks for itself; risk, uncertainty, agitation, and expense must ever surround it. Purchase through State aid, or the fixing of rent through State agency, are the only alternative methods which the Act of 1881 contemplated for the settlement of the Irish Land question. Let anyone investigate and weigh for himself the relative merit and hazard of the two systems; and, whatever may be his conclusions, I do not think that he will oppose the development of the purchase clauses on the ground that it will be a source of increased danger to the State."

After the debate was over, one or two of the Irish landlords who were in the gallery heartily congratulated me, and stated that they believed the acceptance of that motion would do more to settle the Irish Land question than the many complicated provisions of the Land Acts which, during the past fifty years, had been passed into law.

Towards the close of this year sensational rumours occurred in Dublin which ultimately resulted in the arrest and conviction of Cavendish's and Burke's assassins. A number of murders had recently occurred in Dublin, and some of those so murdered were believed to be members of an inner ring of malefactors who had been put out of the way by their colleagues either

because they were unpopular or under suspicion of being informers. A number of the Fenian extremists were arrested, some on information, others on chance of evidence turning up against them after they were arrested. The most notorious of these was a man named Carey. He was placed in a cell between two of his colleagues. One of the detectives came outside his cell, and in a loud voice asked the warder which was ——'s cell, as he had just sent for him in order that he might give them certain information. Carey heard this conversation, and, believing that he was about to be betrayed, in order to forestall his accomplice and save himself, asked the detective to come at once into his cell. He then made a series of revelations which led to the arrest and detention of a gang of murderers known as the "Invincibles." They had over and over again made elaborate plans for Forster's assassination, but by luck and a sudden change in his movements he on several occasions escaped almost miraculously. The assassination of Burke was planned before the Kilmainham Treaty, and it was carried out on the day of Lord Spencer's public entrance into Dublin, as Burke by an accident got detached from his guards. Cavendish was killed in his attempt to protect Burke, and his murder was not premeditated.

The trial of the "Invincibles" caused a great stir in England, Ireland, and America. The callousness of the witnesses and defendants, the readiness and ease with which suspected persons were put out of the way, and the pride of those perpetrating these atrocities proved the gang

to be one of abnormally dangerous and hardened criminals. It was broken up, some receiving death sentences and others life periods of imprisonment. The knives used in the Phoenix Park murders were surgical instruments, and were specially brought over to Dublin by a woman. She escaped to New York, where she was soon surrounded by a circle of admirers, one of whom addressed to her a poem in her praise.

The Government sent Carey out disguised and under a pseudonym in a steamer to South Africa, but his old associates got knowledge of his movements, and he was shot on board ship by a man named O'Donnell.

The environment of the " Invincible " gang was so squalid and repulsive, and their personnel so low down in the scale of criminality, that a general feeling of disgust and fear was aroused, which was not confined to Unionists, but permeated all the better-class Nationalists. They realised that, while a nation could be undone, it could not be united or rehabilitated by a system of such foul assassination.

In the autumn of this year a great subscription was started in Ireland and America to enable Parnell to pay off some mortgages on his property. The sum subscribed came to the handsome amount of £38,000. This was presented to Parnell in Dublin by the Mayor of that city. It was a great function, and a speech adequate to the occasion was the least that was expected from Parnell. But that extraordinary individual declined to do more than take the cheque, put it in his pocket, and acknowledge its receipt in a few curt

and most ungracious words. But he knew his audience and those behind them, and his impassive acquisition of this subscription rather added to than diminished his reputation and power.

CHAPTER XXI

Indecision of Government—Telegram to Cairo—Hicks Pasha—Annihilation of his army—Churchill to the front—Corrupt Practices Bill—London Government Bill—Allegation against me of organising disturbance—Select Committee—Bradlaugh's cross-examination.

DURING the whole of this year the Government—or rather, I should say, the Prime Minister and the Foreign Office—pursued their pitiful policy of declining to face the facts which their own action had so largely created in Egypt.

John Morley became a Member of the House this session, and his powerful influence was thrown on the side of the immediate evacuation of Egypt by our troops. To govern Egypt or to go were the only two alternative courses open to the British Government; but to go meant a revival of the disturbance and outrages which had forced us to come: to stay and administer Egypt was the policy which common sense, humanity, and honesty dictated; but this was a course hateful to the Manchester School, and they had in support of their opposition a cartload of the Prime Minister's Midlothian speeches. So the miserable half-way-house expedient was adopted. We kept temporarily our troops in Egypt, but we left upon the impotent native administration the responsibility of governing.

As might have been anticipated, disaster en-

sued. The Egyptian Government had in their employ a distinguished Indian General, Hicks Pasha. He was put in command of a considerable force composed of the remnants of the old Egyptian Army, and by luck and skill he managed, with the help of a few British officers, to get to and occupy Khartoum. He was then ordered by the Egyptian Government to advance into and reconquer Kordofan, a huge territory which was in occupation by and under the control of the Mahdi. The task was quite beyond Hicks Pasha's strength, and he knew it. He telegraphed to our agent in Cairo asking him to represent this fact to the British Government in the hope that they would do one of two things—either direct the Egyptian Government to stop the expedition, or so strengthen it with British officers and reinforcements as to render it equal to the task imposed upon it. The reply of Downing Street was to this effect: Report quickly decision of Egyptian Government, taking care to give no advice.

The effect of this disgraceful telegram was to send poor Hicks Pasha, his staff of English officers, and his whole army to certain destruction. They were annihilated, and the Mahdi's authority and prestige became omnipotent in all the huge territories south and west of Khartoum over which the Egyptian Government had attempted to reassert their authority. It would be interesting to calculate what this pusillanimous telegram cost the British Government during the next fifteen years in men, money, and reputation.

Major Baring shortly after this disaster was appointed Agent in Egypt, and it was mainly

due to his strong and vigorous personality that Egypt was ultimately rescued from the aberrations of the fact-blind politicians.

Many opportunities for trenchant criticism were thus given to the Opposition ; but Northcote's failing health and his natural reluctance to assert himself threw away chances which, in more daring hands, would have been more effectually utilised for justifiable censure. Churchill's fighting instincts fretted under this inadequate leadership, and he became more aggressive and insolent in his attitude towards Northcote and his colleagues. As a sort of compromise, Sir Michael Hicks Beach undertook to move a vote of censure, and he framed in an able speech so telling an indictment against the Government that Gladstone rose at once to reply to it. The division was good, and the debate created even amongst the staunchest supporters of the Government a feeling of grave uneasiness as to where we were drifting in Egypt. This feeling was accentuated by Lord Derby's feeble handling of difficulties in the Transvaal. The Convention of the Boers was so framed that on its vital clauses each party put a different interpretation. Relations both with France and Germany were bad, and in the latter country Bismarck was becoming more and more incensed against the methods of Gladstone and Granville.

An important change was made in the procedure and expenditure of Parliamentary elections by the introduction of a "Corrupt Practices Bill." It effected important and salutary improvements in the conduct of elections by elimi-

nating expenditure and punishing corruption, both direct and indirect. The Bill was in the hands of Sir Henry James, the Attorney-General. At the last election he had been defeated in Taunton, and, as Sir Henry believed, by indirect inducements or bribery. Being vindictive, he founded his Bill more as a punishment for Taunton than on broad, intelligible, and adaptable principles. The little petty methods of inducement which had prevailed in a small provincial town like Taunton were not only made illegal, but unseated the candidate on whose behalf they were practised. Amongst other trivial lapses, the purchase of ribbon, the gratuitous supply of half a dozen badges were made to vitiate an election. The Bill was, to some extent, spoilt from this cause, and on its subsequent interpretation most conflicting decisions have been given. Members have been unseated for paltry mistakes, whilst much more serious offences have exempted their perpetrators from this penalty. The pocket of the candidate has thus been protected, but the candidates, on the other hand, now frequently have recourse to the public pocket by their promises, and the appalling increase in public expenditure is the corollary of the check put upon private expenditure and bribery during election time. "It is so easy to be generous with other people's money."

During this session the block of public business became even more pronounced than in preceding years. Relief given by the establishment of Grand Committees was evanescent, and it was becoming self-evident that a fraction of the

House, if composed of unscrupulous and advertising Members, had the power either of levying political blackmail or of inconveniencing, if not arresting, the whole business of the country.

The year and session of 1884 were subject to the same untoward symptoms of vacillation and blindness in dealing with foreign and colonial questions which had characterised Gladstone's Government from its installation in office. Difficulties developed and embarrassments thickened throughout the whole of this year by an adherence to indecision and equivocation, thus carrying over to the next year a burden of discredit and disaster which ultimately culminated in the voluntary resignation of the Government from sheer inability to face the consequences of their own lack of policy. But the story, to be told effectively, of the cumulative series of blunders should be consecutive, and belongs as much to the next year as this. I therefore turn to the internal legislation and proposals of the Government, leaving foreign and colonial affairs for a subsequent narrative.

It being advisable to cover up, as far as practicable, external failure by internal and showy legislation, two large schemes of reform were introduced, one dealing with the government of London and the other being an assimilation of the county to the borough franchise, and associating this enlargement of the electorate with a redistribution scheme of Parliamentary representation.

The London Bill fell flat. There was much opposition to it from the existing Local Authori-

ties, and especially from the Corporation of the City of London. It was clear that this question would soon have to be dealt with, and it was desirable that information should be obtained, not only as to the wishes of those residing in the area of the County of London (then known as the Metropolitan Board of Works), but also as to how the experience of existing administrative bodies could be best utilised in the reformed Government. Foremost in opposition to the scheme was the City of London, whose existence would have been swamped and whose revenues would have been absorbed by the new scheme. W. H. Smith told me one day that it was proposed to start a Ratepayers' Association to achieve these two objects, that it was well supported financially, it was fairly representative, but it was essential that it should have at its head a prominent Parliamentarian. He had been asked to become chairman, but he was too busy to take that post: would I undertake the duty? I agreed, and several public meetings were promoted by this body, which were fairly successful. Offices were taken by it, which I visited and found a number of clerks there engaged in the work of the Association.

On the Unionists coming into office in 1885 I was appointed First Lord of the Admiralty, and being very busy the Association passed out of my mind. I was informed a year afterwards that it had been dissolved, as our advent to office had dissipated the danger which it was formed to combat.

In the middle of the session of 1887, after

question time, I was suddenly summoned back to the House, as Mr. George Howell, a working-man, had without notice moved the adjournment of the House in order to denounce me, as Chairman of an organisation which, from indisputable written evidence he had in his possession, he maintained was solely formed to prevent by organised rowdiness and violence the free expression of public opinion at meetings. I was at first taken aback by the charge, which was quite unintelligible. He did not mention the name of the organisation. In reply to him I got up, strongly repudiating the charge and pointing out that it was brought forward by a Member of the Radical Party in London which for some time past had made an habitual practice of disturbing and breaking up Conservative meetings all over London, and to such an extent did this habit prevail that it was only by taking extreme precautions, either by ticket-meetings or by strong bodies of stewards, that we were able to hold any meetings over the greater part of London.

A wrangle ensued, and ultimately W. H. Smith, who was then leading the House, granted a Committee of Inquiry into the subject. Lord Hartington was Chairman of this body. It then came out that the Secretary of this Association, a Mr. Johnson, had abstracted a number of papers and correspondence from the files of the Association, and when it was dissolved he sold them to a Radical organisation; and amongst these documents was a correspondence and data which showed that he, Johnson, had 'out of the funds of the organisation hired persons to go to

Radical meetings in connection with the reform of the government of London to disturb and break up such meetings. I think there is little doubt that some of those who had been instrumental in forming this organisation were cognisant of these proceedings. Fortunately, I had in my possession correspondence with Johnson, in which he repudiated all allegations of this kind. When, therefore, I was examined before the Committee, I was enabled to produce this written evidence, which completely upset the case which certain Radical Members framed against me.

I was cross-examined by Bradlaugh. Bradlaugh was a very big man, and he had enormous feet, which were encased in a gigantic pair of Wellington boots. They attracted my attention, as he was examining me, and after a few questions I saw that I could always ascertain what the effect of my answer upon him was by the wriggling and convulsive motion of these two gigantic boots. So I kept my eyes fastened upon his boots rather than on his face, and the boots soon told me that he was nonplussed and could make nothing of his brief.

The Committee were very fair and entirely exonerated me from the allegations; but I should undoubtedly have been in a difficulty if I had not preserved the correspondence with the venal secretary.

I was at Oxford the same year, and I went into one of the examination rooms, where a number of undergraduates were under oral examination, and I noticed that several of them, when unable to give a satisfactory answer,

wriggled their feet convulsively, just as Bradlaugh's elephantine boots did. It is a curious but apparently not unusual method of expressing mental disquietude, but it is not often observable or feasible, as persons speaking or under examination are generally upon their feet during the ordeal.

This attack and the subsequent examination impressed upon me two cautions: firstly, it is inadvisable to associate yourself hastily with any political organisation, however unobjectionable its objects may seem to be, unless you know the character and antecedents of those who start the organisation; and next, whenever you come in contact with any political agent whose antecedents are not fully known to you, it is wise to keep intact all correspondence you may have with him. It was neglect of the first precaution that got me into this mess, and adherence to the second which extricated me from the difficulty.

CHAPTER XXII

New Franchise Bill—Gladstone on reduction of franchise in Ireland—Refusal of Government to combine franchise and redistribution—Collision with Lords—Visit to Canada—Railway politics in Chicago—Its growth—Inspection by Lord Lansdowne of *voyageurs*—Incidents arising out of it—Henry Matthews.

THE Franchise Bill was not opposed on its second reading by the Conservative Party. The distinction between county and borough franchise was based upon precedent and tradition rather than reason and justice, and the rapid growth of big villages into towns in counties such as Lancashire and Yorkshire brought populous places with the higher county franchise into immediate juxtaposition with boroughs with the lower franchise. Around the Metropolis it was impossible to know when you were in or out of the suburban districts, and a different franchise not unfrequently existed on different sides of the street. We therefore gave way to the change, but many of us objected to the lowering of the franchise in Ireland, which had so recently been permeated by disorder and violence, and a large portion of which was still under coercive measures. W. H. Smith moved an amendment to that effect, but it was mercilessly knocked about by Randolph Churchill, who was then playing to catch the Irish vote at the impending election.

My objection to this reduction of the franchise in Ireland was its probable after-effect upon the demand for Home Rule which up to that time had been emphatically repudiated, with few exceptions, by the whole Liberal Party. Both Plunket and I apprehended that Gladstone, following his usual tactics of adhesion to the wishes of the majority, would make the large number of Parnellite Members who were certain to be returned under this extended franchise an excuse for becoming a Home Ruler. At this time there were seventy-one Home Rulers in the House of Commons, and it was known that, under the extended franchise, the Home Rulers would be from eighty to eighty-four. It was possible to calculate with mathematical precision this increase in the future voting of the Parnellites. The addition was not much in itself, but it would give Parnell, as the Moderate Home Rule Party was sure to be wiped out, at least four-fifths of the representation of Ireland. Plunket, in one of his best speeches, put this case forward very eloquently and forcibly, and he appealed to Gladstone to say whether, under such conditions, he would remain a Unionist. I backed him up strongly. Gladstone replied in one of the plainest and most frank speeches I ever heard him deliver. The whole purport of this speech seemed to his audience to be that never, never would he be guilty of such tergiversation as to advocate Home Rule. Though beaten on a division, we went away happy, as we felt we had extracted from Gladstone such a repudiation of Home Rule as would

effectively prevent him from ever becoming its advocate.

When some sixteen months later on he suddenly hoisted the Home Rule flag, several of us turned up Hansard for this speech. Though the whole contention and argument were unmistakably against the abandonment of his Unionist attitude, there was not a single sentence or any combination of sentences which bound him to that position. It was a perfect specimen of his marvellous dialectical skill in making words appear to mean what they really did not, and of obtaining an ephemeral oratorical victory at the ultimate expense of sincerity and straight dealing. Memories are shorter in politics than in most avocations, and, provided a temporary victory in votes can be achieved, a large section of politicians will always not only ignore but even welcome the tergiversations and repudiations of obligations by which this success is manœuvred.

A serious conflict did ensue as regards the redistribution of seats which this Reform Bill necessitated. The Government wished to pass the Franchise Bill by itself, leaving the Redistribution Bill to be brought in subsequently. We strongly objected to this course. A Redistribution Bill is of all legislative measures the most difficult to get through the Commons if it stands on its own bottom. The reduction of the franchise is popular out of doors, and the pressure in its favour from outside overcomes opposition inside the House. Not so a Redistribution Scheme. Every Member whose constituency is either altered or curtailed in its representation,

or whose boundaries are altered, is against the change. A big Redistribution Bill finds itself up against an organised mass of hostility on both sides of the House, and with no corresponding pressure outside in its favour. The Redistribution Bills of 1832 and 1868 were part and parcel of the Reform Bills of those years. Now it was proposed to depart from that precedent. Dilke, who had become President of the Local Government Board, would from his official position have control of the Redistribution Scheme. He was a born wire-puller, and under his tuition the scheme was certain to be gerrymandered. The Conservative Party was strong in the counties which were under-represented and weak in the boroughs which, with the exception of the Metropolis and a few big towns, were over-represented as a body.

The Lords declined to pass the limited Bill unless redistribution was in it. The Government took up the stock cry that the hereditary House was trying illegitimately to interfere with the franchise of the popular House, and a regular deadlock ensued. Finally the Queen intervened, and through her influence the heads of the two parties conferred. Lord Salisbury was determined that the Redistribution Bill should be framed upon the idea of finality, and he carried the single-member plan which is now in operation. This idea was strongly pressed upon him by Lord St. Aldwyn, Churchill, Ritchie, and myself. My constituency on the existing franchise had over 45,000 voters, and with the proposed increase they would have numbered about 90,000—an impossible number for any two Members to

handle. On the single-seat scheme Middlesex was cut into eight separate constituencies, and I was a proud man when these eight seats in 1885 all returned on the enlarged franchise Conservative candidates by big majorities.

The dynamic forces behind the different parties vary both in their origin and in their application. The Radical Labour Party benefit by sudden social storms and gusts which for the moment sweep the board but subsequently abate in violence if they do not altogether disappear. The larger the unit over whose area they can operate, the greater the difficulty of successfully withstanding their first onset. In a single-member division based upon population the constituency is generally not too big for an intelligent and assiduous Member to anchor himself so as to have a good chance of successfully encountering a sudden storm. Character, adhesion to principles, and reputable antecedents can be felt and made an electioneering power throughout a moderately-sized constituency; and these are attributes more likely to be found in the candidates of our side than the other.

For nearly twenty years the Unionists, through the working of single-member constituencies, dominated the House of Commons. The mal-adventure of so-called Tariff Reform generated a counter-blast of such ubiquity and duration that for ten years past the previous dominant party has been almost powerless, it having been defeated at three general elections in succession—an unprecedented record of electioneering disaster.

There were two sessions in 1884, and in the

interval between the two my brother Claud and I visited the United States and Canada, my brother-in-law, Lord Lansdowne, being then Governor-General of Canada. We visited Chicago before Canada, as my brother was then a director of the Grand Trunk Railway. The directors of that enterprise, through a railway franchise obtained in the States, had linked up Chicago and New York and given through Canadian territory an alternative route to the monopoly then enjoyed by the New York Central. The New York Central was in the hands of a very powerful syndicate who made use of every weapon which legal ingenuity or money could suggest to prevent the Grand Trunk from establishing a passenger terminus in Chicago. The municipality and population of Chicago naturally favoured competition, and on this presumption the managers of the Grand Trunk Railway and its branches successfully planned and carried out the following *coup de main*.

They had a goods station just outside Chicago, but they could not obtain a site for a passenger station inside, as their opponents always by law or money prevented such a purchase. There was a clause in a General Railway Bill of the State of Illinois in which it is laid down that if once a locomotive passed over a made railway track the only question which could subsequently arise as to the possession of the land so used was one of price—the price to be assessed by a given tribunal. The object of this clause was to facilitate the extension of railroads in sparsely populated districts where the rights of proprietorship were

unsettled. The Grand Trunk determined to utilise this clause and to apply it to the populated districts of Chicago. They first squared the municipality, who promised to wink at their proceedings; they went to the police, who undertook not to interfere if there was no riot, and if the courts were open for an injunction; they next employed the ablest Counsel in the city to obstruct and talk out any application that might be made for an injunction; and finally they got ready a huge gang of competent and fighting navvies to whom they promised very special remuneration if they completed the task given them by a certain time.

Late on Friday night operations began, and an attack was made on all the houses, obstacles, and impedimenta which intervened between the goods station and the proposed site for the passenger depôt. Where the houses were more than one storey high a hole was cut in it sufficient for the rails and the progress of a locomotive. Ample compensation was promised to all those so disturbed, and the populace generally looked upon these strange proceedings with approval.

The rival party got the alarm, but the municipality was not sitting, the police authorities declined to interfere, and the law courts were not open till ten o'clock on Saturday morning. The mass of navvies working with redoubled energy were too numerous and physically too powerful to be interfered with, except by military force, and none was available. In the court-house at ten o'clock on Saturday morning the application for an injunction was made, but the opposing

Counsel so spun out proceedings that it was not obtained till after four o'clock and could not, in consequence of some local enactment, be brought into operation till eight o'clock on Monday morning.

All Saturday night and Sunday and Sunday night the work of demolition went on, and before eight o'clock on Monday morning, when the injunction became operative, the work was done.

This filibustering feat met with high approval in railway circles in Chicago. My brother was congratulated on having been associated with the smartest railway feat of modern times, and I got some of his reflected glory.

I had paid a previous visit to Chicago in 1867. Since then the town had been practically burned down, and its resurrection was one of the most astonishing feats of modern civilisation. It was an extraordinarily prosperous place at the time we were there. There was a great corner in wheat going on, and we went to the Board of Trade (equivalent to a Produce Exchange), where the excitement was intense. I noticed that scarcely any of the brokers who were taking part in this controversy were over thirty, and I was told that the strain is so great that very few men after that age can sustain it. The speculation goes on in the big hotels after the Board of Trade is closed for the day.

The most interesting person that we met in Chicago was the agent of the Grand Trunk—a Mr. Howe. He was sent for the purposes of health when quite a boy to Chicago when it was a small fishing village, and he himself had seen it rise to

its present dimensions, he never having ceased to be a resident in the locality. I asked him what were the advantages which Chicago had over the capitals or big towns of the neighbouring States, and he told me that Chicago always must, so far as the United States are concerned, be the headquarters of the wheat trade, the meat trade, and the lumber trade. I asked him why; he said the wheat zone could not for climatic reasons extend much south of Chicago. Experience had shown that St. Louis and other towns south of Chicago were less favourably situated for cattle markets, as the heat in the lairs was so great in summer-time that the beasts rapidly deteriorated; and as regards the lumber trade Chicago was on one of the big lakes where the finest lumber in the world was to be found, and where extraordinary natural facilities of transport by water existed. So confident was he as regards the future of Chicago that he predicted* it must become the biggest city in the world.

We returned from Chicago to Quebec, and whilst there we took part in a very interesting ceremony in connection with the farewell speech given by the Governor-General to a large body of boatmen or *voyageurs* who had been enlisted for the expedition which under Lord Wolseley was going to the relief of Gordon.

In going to this vessel on board of which was this large number of boatmen, Lord Lansdowne was accosted on the wharf by a pretty woman with blue eyes and blonde hair, who asked him if he would be kind enough to take her in his boat, as it was her last chance of seeing her

husband. He came from the north-west, and had left so suddenly that he had had no opportunity of saying good-bye to her ; and she pleaded so gently and nicely that Lord Lansdowne, with his characteristic courtesy, at once assented. I looked at the lady while in the boat, and there was a very determined look in the lower part of her face, and she kept her hand always inside her blouse, in which she evidently had got something which from its outward shape looked like a pistol. When we got to the vessel I was the last of our party to go up the gangway, and behind me came my friend with the blue eyes. The moment the sentries at the gangway saw her they stiffened up, and as she tried to pass them put their rifles across the gangway and said : " You know you are not allowed here." A glint of concentrated fury shot out from the blue eyes, and I thought she was going to shoot one of the sentries ; but the quartermaster seized her promptly by both arms, took her down the gangway, and put her in a boat and sent her ashore. I asked : " Who is this lady ? and what does she want ? " In reply they said : " Oh, that woman has been trying for the last three days to shoot her husband : he is perfectly terrified of her and is hiding in the hold, and strict orders have been given on no account whatever to admit her on this ship." Lord Lansdowne was very much taken aback when he found out that he had unconsciously associated himself with this homicidal enterprise.

On board the vessel there was a wonderful collection of tough, weather-beaten men, composed of English settlers from the Far West, French

Canadians, and Indian canoe-men. The idea of utilising these men had occurred to Lord Wolseley, as he believed they could be successfully used upon the Nile, he having derived great benefits from their employ in the Red River Expedition.

We often hear that each language not only has its psychological idiosyncrasy, but that it has an unconscious effect in regulating and prompting the gestures and motions of the individual when speaking it. Lansdowne can speak French as well as English. He gave an admirable address in English to the British boatmen: it was kindly, encouraging, full of sound patriotic sentiment, and it was delivered in the strictest gubernatorial style without gesture or motion. He then turned round to the French Canadians. His speech was in substance much the same, though the sentences were shorter and terser; but in less than two minutes he spoke with all the animation of a born Frenchman, with all the gesticulation and vivacity of the race, and the staidness of his demeanour entirely disappeared. The genius of the French language had taken possession of him, and he concluded an impassioned oration in the most approved French style, both as regards language and movements. I asked him afterwards if he was conscious of any change. He was very much surprised, and told me that he was quite unconscious of any difference in attitude or gestures in making the two speeches.

It is curious what an inherent dislike the average Englishman has to gesticulation or to what in the boxing ring would be known as "foot movement" during a public speech.

Mr. Henry Matthews (Lord Llandaff) was certainly one of the most eloquent and scholarly Parliamentary speakers of his time ; but he gesticulated a great deal with his hands, and he wobbled with his knees. The result was that he never attained in the House of Commons the oratorical fame which his undoubted great powers entitled him to achieve. A lady who was an habituée of the Speaker's Gallery and a good judge of Parliamentary likes and dislikes, once said to me : " If I could only bandage Mr. Matthews' knees before he made his next big speech, he would become and would be acknowledged to be one of the great orators in the House of Commons."

CHAPTER XXIII

Franchise and redistribution—Quarrel settled—*Pall Mall Gazette* campaign for increase of Navy—Government surrender—Serious trouble with Bismarck—Capture of Khartoum and death of Gordon—General indignation—Debates—Narrow majority for Government—Collision with Russia—Imminence of war—Vote of Credit for eleven millions—Personal intervention of Czar—My speech on Budget—Mrs. Gladstone in Speaker's Gallery—Difficulty of renewing Coercion Bills for Ireland—Government defeated on Budget—Abstention from division of Radicals—Gladstone's resignation.

ON our return to England we found the franchise and redistribution controversy practically settled. A large scheme of redistribution was by agreement between the two parties to be associated with the reduction of the franchise, and an influential Commission with Sub-Commissions was to be appointed to give local effect to the principles so accepted. The House of Commons almost without criticism or division took this settlement, which has been in force now for more than a generation. The settlement was based upon a partial recognition of the principle of constituencies being regulated by population. I am quite satisfied that this principle ought to be adopted now in its entirety, and equal electoral districts formed as the constituencies of the future. It is the only method by which the undue preponderance given to Irish representation and the outlying districts of

Wales and Scotland can be rectified upon an intelligent and automatic basis, and gigantic constituencies reduced to their proper proportions.

It is a fact that the patriotism and prescience of the constituency seems to vary in proportion as it is near to or remote from the Metropolis. The farther off it is, the less disposed it seems to be to make common cause or to endure self-sacrifice for the common end. In his latter days Gladstone had almost a monopoly of support from these remote and isolated constituencies, and he therefore seriously argued that remoteness from the Metropolis was a justification for an over-representation to the constituencies so situated.

Two fresh difficulties had cropped up, both traceable to the principles laid down in the Midlothian campaign, and both unpleasant pills for the Government to swallow. In no part of his ubiquitous attack upon his rival's policy was Gladstone more emphatic than in laying down the necessity of reducing the existing expenditure upon the Army and Navy. He had brought his great personal influence to bear upon the expenditure of both these departments since he had been in office, with the result that he had so weakened the effective strength of the Navy that serious apprehension as to its capacity to defend either the shores or commerce of Great Britain had arisen in the minds of his own supporters. The method by which the naval expenditure had been curtailed was truly Gladstonian. Forts were in evidence, but they had no guns; coaling stations appeared on the

Estimates, but they were undefended; a large programme of shipbuilding was annually announced, but provision for its advancement was wholly insufficient; ships were announced as completed, though they were gunless; and worst of all, guns were mounted on ships but with no ammunition for the service of the guns.

The *Pall Mall Gazette*, under the editorship of W. T. Stead, started a campaign against this make-believe policy, and so vigorous was its propaganda and so unanswerable the facts at its command, that in a short time it had the Government at its mercy. Gladstone was forced to yield and to agree to an extra Vote of £3,100,000 in the middle of the financial year for the purpose of increasing naval expenditure. This procedure in time of peace was almost unknown, and was in itself conclusive condemnation of the policy which previously had been in force. I little imagined at the time this Vote was proposed that in less than a year I should find myself at the Admiralty and, as First Lord, able to test and verify the great indictment now formulated against my predecessors.

The violent attacks made upon Imperialism, or extension of the British Empire, which form so large a portion of the Radical creed had an effect upon foreign nations unforeseen by our Little Englanders at home. Those attacks were a direct encouragement to other European nations to take what they coveted in Africa and elsewhere. Prince Bismarck took the lead in this operation. He would blandly inquire of Lord Granville, the Foreign Secretary, if Great Britain

had any sovereign rights over certain districts. If the reply was in the negative—and, according to Radical theories, the answer would almost invariably be to that effect—he would announce that Germany intended to annex the districts in question. Then there was a flutter in the Radical dovecot, and a dispatch contradicting previous utterances would be issued. For four years this little game went on, Bismarck becoming angrier and more hostile to Great Britain. Finally, after declaring that no agreement could be arrived at with a Government whose Foreign Secretary amused himself by writing such contradictory dispatches, he annexed, in the teeth of these protests, *Angra Pequena* and New Guinea, whereupon the Colonies affected became angry, and Queensland sent a Police Officer with a boatload of men to annex such portions of New Guinea as Germany had left.

Gladstone, Granville, and Derby were three men of exceptional ability, yet, weighted down by and committed to the ultra-doctrine of the Manchester School, they so managed the Imperial, Colonial, and Foreign affairs of Great Britain when given a free hand by Parliament, that at the end of four years they had not a friend in Europe and had caused the deepest dissatisfaction to our Overseas Dominions.

In Egypt the policy of "Wait and see" was following its usual course ; responsibility and the provisions for its enforcement were ignored or explained away, action only taken when too late, men and money wasted and misused, till the crash came in Gordon's capture and death.

·Khartoum was stormed, and the Soudan for half a generation was given over to an atrocious and bloodthirsty régime.

All this is now history, and the exhaustive record of the tergiversations, stupidity, and blindness of Gladstone's policy in Egypt has been so well narrated by Lord Cromer that it would be a waste of time again to traverse ground already so thoroughly covered.

On the 5th February 1885 news arrived of Gordon's death, and the indignation and disgust at the news thus received were universal, and a cry arose in certain quarters that it was imperative upon the British Government to smash the Mahdi. The Government endeavoured to weather the storm by pretending that they were moving forces up the Nile for some such purpose. A vote of censure was moved in the House of Commons and was defeated by fourteen votes only—302 to 288.

Bad as the division was for the Government, the debate was worse. No man could understand what the Government policy was, and each successive explanation from the Treasury Bench made it still more unintelligible. Two things saved the Government: first, that Hartington was Secretary of State for War, and on him the burden of defence fell. He rose, as he always did, to the occasion, and there was a frank admission of shortcomings and failure on his part which placated many of his followers. There was also the serious practical difficulty that any general election occurring at this moment must be superseded by a further general election in November

on the enlarged franchise and redistribution scheme. Neither side wished to undergo this double ordeal. Thus the Government was saved for the moment, as no one was willing to take their place under such conditions.

But misfortune and blundering still dogged their steps. They were compelled to withdraw all troops from the great province of Dongola, leaving that territory to the tender mercies of the Mahdi, and even after that withdrawal an Egyptian Army which they had raised was severely defeated outside Suakin. But they soon became involved in a yet more serious imbroglio which brought them to the very edge of a war with Russia.

For some time past negotiations had been going on for the delimitation of the northern and western boundaries of Afghanistan, and the British and Russian Governments had agreed to appoint a joint Commission for that purpose, on which Afghans were also represented. A well-known British officer, Sir Peter Lumsden, was the chief British representative on this body. The Russians put forward claims to the possession of certain territory as a preliminary to negotiation instead of waiting for adjudication upon the localities in question. This was represented to Her Majesty's Government by Lumsden, and they received from the Russian Government an assurance that orders would be sent in restraint of any such action by their representatives on the spot. Whether any such instructions were sent or ignored, or whether the authorities on the spot acted on their own initiative, was

never clearly proved. A quarrel was, however, deliberately provoked with the Afghan troops occupying the territories under discussion, and the Russians advanced, having defeated the Afghans with heavy casualties and driving them out of Penjdeh, which was within the recognised Afghan border. They then occupied that place.

The transaction was so utterly unjustifiable, and at first sight seemed such a deliberate breach of faith, that the general belief was that the Russian authorities had determined either to insult Great Britain in the eyes of Asia under the impression that she dared not take umbrage at the act, or that they had settled on war. Under these conditions there was nothing for Gladstone to do but to adopt a determined attitude in the face of such a menace, and he promptly came down to the House and demanded a Vote of Credit of eleven millions sterling, and directed both the Admiralty and the War Office to take preparatory steps for the mobilisation of the forces of the Empire. His speech on this occasion was magnificent, both in tone and delivery, though to many of us it seemed a cruel irony of fate that the man who only seven years before had mercilessly attacked Beaconsfield for asking for a Vote of Credit to save Constantinople from Russia, should now be asking for nearly double that amount to protect an unknown hamlet in Afghanistan from the same power.

By a curious but fortunate misunderstanding, Gladstone got this Vote of Credit without discussion or division. A sense of unity and unanimity was created, so far as Great Britain's attitude was

concerned, which was at the moment most essential. But the discussion collapsed—or rather, I should say, was not started, by a pure accident.

Churchill had a great oration ready which, however effective it would have been from a party view, would not have promoted pacification. He, however, believed that Northcote, in accordance with Parliamentary custom, would have followed Gladstone, and he waited for him to get up; but Northcote was unwell and did not wish to speak. The question was put quickly and passed, and the almost unfailing approval shown next day both by the Press and the public at the acquiescent attitude of the House of Commons made it impolitic by any subsequent diatribes to upset the unanimity thus established.

Gladstone's enthusiasm infused a little vitality into his followers, and the Government held together for some months longer. During that period they had daily to do all that they had denounced—pile up taxation, take up transports, mobilise the Fleet, and make what hasty preparations they could for the conduct of a great war. By the personal intervention of the Emperor of Russia, a compromise was arrived at later on under Lord Salisbury's régime, and an explanation offered which enabled the interrupted delimitation to be continued and so brought to a final and satisfactory conclusion. From that day till now Russia has always recognised the arrangements thus made, and although opportunities have occurred which she might have utilised for its upset, she has honourably

and scrupulously adhered to her side of this arrangement. So far as my experience of arrangements made with Russia as regards Central Asia are concerned—and I speak with a long personal experience—Russia has always respected the conventions she then made. I lay stress on this fact, as there is a disposition in certain quarters to attribute to Russia a want of good faith. No doubt, under their old system of government, in which the War Office and Admiralty were practically independent of the Foreign Office, there was not always unity between understandings arrived at by the Foreign Office and their execution by the Executive Departments of the Russian Government; but the establishment of Constitutional Government in Russia with a Council of Ministers has effectively counteracted this administrative confusion.

There was a deficit in consequence of these warlike preparations of eleven millions sterling, which in those days was looked upon as an unparalleled financial catastrophe. On the second reading of the Budget I was asked by Salisbury to make a strong and general attack all down the line, as I was supposed to be well up in the Midlothian speeches and therefore qualified to draw unpleasant contrasts between promise and performance. All Members of the Opposition were at that time greatly incensed against Gladstone, for we regarded him as primarily responsible for Gordon's death and the heavy and futile loss of life caused by our military failures in Egypt. I therefore made a long and very strongly worded speech, going deliberately as near as I could to the

limits allowed to Parliamentary invective. My wife was in the Speaker's Gallery, and so was Mrs. Gladstone. After I had spoken for some time, Mrs. Gladstone got up and said: "I can't stand any more of this man." She went out, had tea, and came back and unconsciously sat down next to my wife, whom she had known for many years. I had not finished, and she exclaimed: "That horrid man still speaking!" and then, seeing who was next to her, she with her inimitable aplomb said to my wife, patting the back of her hand: "Never mind, my dear, he will soon have done."

No Prime Minister ever had a more devoted and, in my judgment, a more capable helpmate. She never showed in the most difficult and awkward positions either want of dignity or resource, and her inherent kindness of heart and good nature were universally admitted by all who knew her.

As the session drew on, nearer and nearer came the critical question—were the Irish Coercion Bills which lapsed this year to be renewed or to be dropped? Many were the discussions and searchings of heart, the lobbying and intrigues amongst the Radical Party over this very simple question. If any attempt to renew these Bills were made, it was certain that the Nationalist vote in Great Britain would be polled against those who renewed these Bills. The longer the question was postponed the more difficult became the renewal of these Acts, as time was becoming curtailed and their reimposition on the Statute Book would necessarily take much time. Then a brilliant idea occurred to some Radical wire-puller: "Let us be beaten on some other issue;

let us put our opponents in, and let them settle the awkward job we leave them." There was an important amendment on the Budget which was moved by Hicks Beach. When a division on this amendment was called, no less than seventy-six unpaired Liberals were absent, and by a small majority the Government was beaten. That this defeat was not accidental was clear from what followed. Although his followers proposed to resuscitate Gladstone by a vote of confidence, that astute old gentleman declined in any way to be so rehabilitated. A political deadlock ensued.

CHAPTER XXIV

Salisbury hesitates to accept office—Nature of difficulties to be overcome—Message from Bismarck—Salisbury accepts office—Northcote becomes a Peer—I go to Admiralty—Chaos in Admiralty—Success of new Government—Churchill's intimacy with Irish Party—Difficulty of maintaining authority in Ireland with no coercive powers—Maanstrasna Murder—Review of the case—Debates in Parliament—Churchill's perturbation—Irish vote—How distributed—Certainty in Radical mind of large majority—My forecast—Sir Henry Maine—Result of election—Gladstone's instantaneous adoption of Home Rule.

THE Queen sent for Lord Salisbury, and though he did not refuse off-hand to form a Ministry, he had grave misgivings as to the wisdom or even possibility of undertaking such a task. Though the late Government were utterly discredited, their supporters, even without the Parnellite Members, constituted a considerable majority in the House of Commons, and the vexation they felt at the utter collapse of their leader's policy did not premise a likelihood of abstention from interfering with and outvoting an administration of political opponents. The Budget had to be recast and the Estimates passed. This was impossible unless some guarantee could be obtained from Gladstone that he would restrain his followers from opposition and factiousness. Though he was jaded and physically unwell and anxious to get rid of his responsibilities, he could not be

brought to do more than give vague promises of abstention from interference or obstruction for the remaining weeks of the session. There was the difficult and burning question of a renewal of the Coercion Acts in Ireland. If the Conservatives took office, their reimposition was an impossibility, as lack of time and a hostile majority were insuperable obstacles against such a policy. That being so, could Salisbury and his colleagues undertake the responsibility of administering Ireland between now and a general election with no powers behind them except the ordinary law? It was clear also that if any idea of accepting office was entertained, the Commons leader must be strong, alert, and physically capable of facing a severe ordeal. Northcote's failing health incapacitated him from such a task. Yet both he and Lady Northcote clung to the idea that he would be the next Prime Minister. The assumption of office meant the deposition of Northcote from the leadership of the House of Commons.

These unpleasant but unavoidable exigencies had to be admitted and faced if office was taken. Would the rank and file of the party understand these difficulties? and even if they understood them, would they support the apparent deviation from orthodoxy which would necessarily follow? Dropping the Irish coercive measures would, for the time being, placate the Parnellites and probably induce them to support us in the House of Commons. Would Conservatives tolerate even such a temporary support from those whose actions and aims were so detestable to them? On the other hand, strong, patriotic, and party reasons

could be given for not running away from responsibility. The late Government were thoroughly unpopular and quite inept, as they hopelessly failed both as administrators and statesmen. Would it not be, both from a national and even party standpoint, an advantage if fresh minds took over the Government? And might they not be able between now and the general election so to act and legislate as to extricate, to some extent, the affairs of the country from the hopeless tangle in which they were involved? If this could be done, there being a deep and general belief in Salisbury's integrity and capacity, should not we, under his leadership, so improve the national position and strengthen our own party prospects as to obtain a larger vote at the general election in November, and thus be more useful in the future?

In the midst of these ruminations I received one morning a visit from an old friend of mine, Colonel S——. At that moment he happened to be Military Attaché at Berlin. We had been officers together in the Rifle Brigade, where we became very intimate. S—— began the conversation by saying: "I want you to give me a letter to Lord Salisbury." "Certainly," I said. "But why do you want to see him?" "If you will not repeat the reason, I will tell you, as I know that you are in the inner circle of politics with Lord Salisbury. The day before I left Berlin, Bismarck sent one of his agents to see me and to tell me that he wished me on my arrival in London to give to Lord Salisbury the following message: 'That he, Bismarck, had found it impossible to carry on busi-

ness with Gladstone's Government. They never knew their own mind or case, and at times they would not even answer his letters. He therefore hoped Salisbury would take office, and if he did so he would try to establish better relations with England, as he wanted Great Britain to be a greater force in the councils of Europe than she was at that time." Whether this message decided Salisbury or not, I cannot say, but a short time after its reception he did accept office.

The story of S—— is confirmed by another which subsequently came to my ears. When later on Sir Edward Malet was Ambassador at Berlin, his wife was seriously ill in England. He hesitated to leave Berlin, as some special Anglo-German business was on the tapis. Bismarck sent him a message to say that, so long as Lord Salisbury was Prime Minister of England, Malet could leave Berlin without risk.

My experience of Bismarck's subsequent action certainly endorses these stories. He liked Salisbury, he worked with him, and he sent his son Herbert over here to cultivate better relations with England, and up to the end of his tenure of office he was not unfriendly to us. It was upon these manifestations of goodwill towards us that we were induced to cede Heligoland to Germany. But from the date of the cession of that island our relations steadily deteriorated. Offensive and aggressive language, both in official dispatches and in the Press, began to characterise the German attitude towards us, and the change in tone is almost coincident with the Kaiser's dethronement

of Bismarck and the retention in his own hands of the foreign policy of his country.

Upon Salisbury's forming his Government, Northcote went up to the Upper House with the title of Earl, and he became Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs; but he bitterly felt his deposition from the leadership of the House of Commons, and Salisbury had some difficulty in inducing him to agree to this arrangement. Though it was the fashion to say that Randolph Churchill had expelled him from the House of Commons, it is only fair to add that Salisbury did not make these proposals until after he had consulted W. H. Smith, John Manners, and other men in the House of Commons whose opinion he valued, and they were unanimously of the opinion that the physical condition of Northcote was such as to render it impossible for him to undertake, under the trying conditions of the moment, the leadership of a Government in a minority in the House of Commons.

Hicks Beach had marked himself out as a leader by a succession of excellent speeches, and he became Chancellor of the Exchequer, and Churchill Secretary of State for India. The circumstances in which I became First Lord of the Admiralty are worth noting, as they exemplify the extraordinary unselfishness and sense of duty of W. H. Smith.

He and I had an appointment at the same time with Salisbury, and on coming into the room together, Salisbury said in his incisive way: "Smith, I want you to go back to the Admiralty, and you, Hamilton, to the War Office." I was

taken aback at this proposal, and said : " If you really wish it, I will try the office, but you know the necessity for reform in that Department. The Duke of Cambridge was Field Marshal at the time I was Junior Ensign in the Guards. Shall I not be in an impossible position if I attempt to carry through necessary changes and reforms? And ought not the Secretary of State for War to be an older man?" Salisbury turned to Smith : " I think there is force in what Hamilton says. Will you undertake the War Office?" Smith hesitated for a moment, and then said : " If you press it and really wish it, I will do so."

My usual luck had attended me, for in two minutes I was transformed from the most difficult and invidious post in the Cabinet to the blue ribbon of office. That Smith without hesitation should have given up to a younger colleague a delightful office to which he had a personal claim in exchange for a most unpleasant and unpalatable post is only one illustration of the extraordinary sense of duty and self-sacrifice he displayed during the whole of his life. When later on, as Leader of the House of Commons, he was always calling upon the House to do their duty, he was only repeating publicly his daily incentive to himself. I left that room with my admiration for and love of Smith greatly enhanced, for I felt that there was not another man in politics who in the same position would have shown such chivalrous self-abnegation.

To our surprise the reception of the new Government by the House of Commons was not only sympathetic but cordial. It was generally

admitted that we were only a stop-gap Government ; but the absence of pretension and the calm business-like demeanour of the new Leader's speech generally pleased the House. His recast of the Budget was simple but effective, and was assented to by all parties.

Churchill began to develop his extraordinary Parliamentary aptitude. His speech on the Indian Budget was a remarkable performance, though very scathing in its denunciation of the policy of the ex-Viceroy, Lord Ripon.

Salisbury in his post of Prime Minister was a *persona grata* in all the Chancelleries of Europe, and their confidence in him was promptly justified by his coming at once to terms with Russia for the pacific delimitation of North-West Afghanistan. We were also able to pass certain minor administrative Bills which gave general satisfaction ; in fact, the House of Commons was tired of the old lot and ready to welcome any change.

As I have before stated, I was First Lord of the Admiralty, and associated with me was Charles Ritchie, afterwards Chancellor of the Exchequer, who took the post of Parliamentary Secretary to the Admiralty. We found the Admiralty in a state of administrative chaos, and one of the first blunders we unearthed was a miscalculation of a million in the expenditure of one branch of the Department alone. This revelation made a considerable sensation and greatly annoyed Gladstone. He was cut to the quick to be told that any department of the Government of which he was head should have incurred such an expenditure without proper sanction.

I do not think I ever saw him more irritated than he was when the Chancellor of the Exchequer made public this default in clear and somewhat caustic terms.

Amongst other Bills, a Land Purchase Bill, known as Ashbourne's Act, was to my delight brought in to facilitate land purchase in Ireland. This was the first of a series of legislative Acts which have done so much towards the pacification and prosperity of Ireland. The Parnellite Party were greatly pleased at the abandonment of the Coercion Bill and the introduction of the Land Bill, and they gave a somewhat too ostentatious support to us to please many of our friends. There were rumours of intrigues and understandings between the Government and Parnell's followers, and a certain substance was given to these rumours from the intimate terms which Churchill had established between himself and certain Irish Members when sitting below the gangway. It was freely asserted that we had secured the Irish support by concessions not only as regards the administration of law and order in Ireland, but even to the extent of promising some form of autonomous government. Churchill, whom I had got to know intimately, always assured me that the only understanding to which he had ever been a party was his statement that if the Conservatives did take office in this Parliament they would not renew the existing Coercion Bill. It was a very safe proposition to lay down, because the mere fact of our taking office at the end of a session, in a House where we were a comparatively small minority made the re-

imposition of such legislation an impossibility. I am quite certain that Churchill's statement was correct, for when later on he as Leader of the Unionist Party in the House of Commons became the most formidable opponent of the Nationalists, though he was violently attacked, it was never insinuated by any of his opponents that he had broken any engagement with them or had induced them to support him by advances or promises which he had since broken. After his celebrated speech in which he said at Belfast: "Ulster will fight, and Ulster will be right," the animosity against him amongst the Parnellites was extremely bitter, and they would have fully utilised any allegation of bad faith if it had had a shadow of substance behind it.

There was at this time a wide divergence of opinion as to the future policy to be pursued in Ireland, and Chamberlain and Dilke had framed a somewhat "shadowy" scheme of Provincial Councils; but for some reason or other, they were not in favour with the Nationalists, who were disposed on all occasions to give them the cold shoulder. Lord Spencer, late Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, and his legal subordinates had shown remarkable courage in suppressing outrage and violence, and he had made a drastic but very successful use of the strong extraordinary powers given to him. All loyalists felt deeply indebted to him for his fearless conduct, but, as is always the case in dealing summarily with wholesale violence and crime, mistakes are from time to time made which do call for subsequent investigation and review.

Murders of a very deliberate and brutal character had been committed at Maanstrasna in the west of Ireland, and on such a scale as to have necessitated the employment of a considerable gang. This gang was hunted down, and punishment was inflicted upon various of its members by hanging or imprisonment. The new Lord-Lieutenant and Chief Secretary of Ireland were Lord Carnarvon and Sir William Hart Dyke. They had been most carefully selected for those posts, and a better choice could not have well been made. Lord Carnarvon, though at times erratic, was a man of exceptional ability, with charming manners and an open and receptive mind, and he was specially qualified to sustain an attitude of conciliation and impartiality. Dyke was a man of great practical experience, an excellent judge of character, absolutely straight and frank, a fine sportsman, and a very noted athlete. The task they had to undertake was extraordinarily difficult. For reasons already stated, they had nothing behind them but the ordinary law, and they had for the maintenance of order largely to rely upon the good behaviour of the Nationalists. It was therefore advisable for them to give no opportunity whatever in the administration of the ordinary law for charges of unfairness or injustice; and, on the other hand, they had to keep down and punish violence and outrage with nothing but the ordinary law at their disposal.

Very shortly after the Government accepted office, at some public function John Bright made a violent attack on the Parnellites, flaying them

in the denunciatory language of which he was so consummate a master, and at the same time he highly eulogised Spencer. Attention was called to this speech in Parliament. Bright, though in bad health, came up to the House of Commons and defended himself with courage and skill; but he unreservedly adhered to all he had said. The debate though short was hot, and the Leader of the House, naturally wishing to bring it to a close, did use language which might have seemed depreciatory of Spencer and at variance with Bright's denunciations. This little episode caused a good deal of annoyance to Ulstermen, who assumed that Churchill had prompted this speech. A few days later it was announced that the Lord-Lieutenant would re-investigate the case of certain prisoners connected with the Maanstrasna outrage. It was not unusual for the Lord-Lieutenant so to exercise his powers; but the fact that, in this instance, the power was to be used in connection with agrarian and political murders raised a storm of indignation amongst our stalwarts which was not abated by some caustic remarks by our Solicitor-General upon the intolerance of the malcontents.

It was a bad evening. I drove home with Churchill; he was very much perturbed and feared that this protest would seriously impair the prestige of the Government and diminish their chances of success at the forthcoming election. Though unhappy at this contretemps I told him that it would not materially affect us, provided nothing further occurred to annoy or

excite the suspicion of our stalwarts. A few days later two of the Liverpool Members refused to appear on the same platform with Churchill, and though this refusal greatly incensed him it had, in one sense, a salutary effect and made him much more careful for the future.

In the elections which occurred a few months later we did get, in certain constituencies, the Parnellite vote, but the vote so given was bestowed upon personal rather than general grounds. In my family there were four of us standing for different constituencies in England and Ireland, and we were all returned. In each of these constituencies the Parnellites to a man voted against us. Parnell, in arranging his British voting power, had two objects in view—to get a political hold over the weaker Unionist candidates, and next to exaggerate his voting power in the minds of the Radicals by returning as many Conservatives as possible. The support so given to a section of our party and the circumstances in which it was given were, I think, a blot upon our political escutcheon; but the support was very ephemeral and vanished after the next election, never to be renewed.

However unpleasant these divergencies of opinion in our party were, they were nothing compared with the dissensions in the opposite camp. The main question before the new electorate was not Ireland—for the Radical Party were then practically unanimous in their repudiations of Home Rule—but social and agricultural reform. Chamberlain started his unauthorised programme which contained some novel doctrines,

both social and agricultural. "Three acres and a cow" were dangled before the agricultural labourers, and in industrial centres hints of ransom from the well-to-do were freely promulgated. Hartington and Goschen were strongly opposed to this school of thought, and during the election the most exciting incident on the platform was the vigorous and continuous duel which was carried on between these two antagonistic sections of the Liberal Party.

But though there were differences of opinion upon home and social questions, all our leading opponents were united in one belief, namely, that the result of the election would give them such a majority as to make them independent of Conservative and Home Rule alike. All their forecasts of policy and all their speeches were based on this assumption. Gladstone laid down that it would not be safe or honourable to legislate for Ireland unless they were independent of the Irish votes. His chief lieutenant, Harcourt, went further. His view of the situation was that the Parnellites should be allowed to "stew in their own juice."

At the election of 1880 I had attempted a forecast which came very nearly right, so I made a more careful estimate upon the data available as to what would be the probable result of the present contest. Upon one point there was no room for doubt: it was certain that the Parnellite Party would not be less than eighty or more than eighty-six. This was known to every political tyro. Gladstone, Harcourt, and others who during the election took up so uncompromising an

attitude against Home Rule did so with a full knowledge of this certainty. What they did not know or accurately forecast was the number of Conservatives to be returned. They became Home Rulers, not because over eighty Parnellites were returned, but because the Conservatives came back so strong that they were unable to obtain office except through the assistance of the Parnellites. This assertion is confirmed by the following story.

Sir Henry Maine had always been very kind to me, and we were on very intimate terms ever since our association together at the India Office. In the autumn of this year we each had a house on the Surrey Downs, and there was only a heath intervening between our two abodes. Maine paid a series of visits to various political friends, and when he came back he walked over to see me. We discussed the impending election, and he said: "I have been in contact with the leading Radical wire-pullers, Harcourt, Trevelyan, and others, and they all are confident that they are going to give you a tremendous beating." In reply I said: "We shall be heavily beaten, but I think we shall come back about 250 strong." Maine turned round in intense surprise: "You are not serious?" "Yes," I said; "that is my calculation." "Well," he said, "if you are approximately right, you will see some very funny things happen. They think that you will come back about 140, but in no circumstances can you reach the figure of 200." And again he repeated: "If you are right, you will see some very queer things ensue."

My estimate was a very accurate one, for we came back 249 strong, Parnellites 86, making a total of 335, and in combination we were an impregnable barrier to Gladstone's return to office. Within less than three weeks of the election the "queer things" which Maine predicted had occurred. Gladstone sent a Home Rule manifesto to the *Leeds Mercury*. When asked whether it represented his views, he characteristically replied: "It is not an accurate representation but a speculation." He opened negotiations with the Parnellites, he secured their support, and in the early days of the new session he ousted the Government from office on a motion made by Jesse Collings. He reinstated himself in office as an out-and-out Home Ruler.

In thus taking one of the sharpest curves known in political tergiversation, Gladstone was influenced amongst other considerations by two facts. In the preceding autumn Carnarvon had a private interview with Parnell. It was a most injudicious act on his part, as he found to his cost in the garbled account which Parnell afterwards gave of this interview. He had, however, previously received the assent of Lord Salisbury, though his action was unknown to the rest of the Cabinet. Parnell took care that Gladstone should know of this incident, and it was so reported to him as to induce him to believe that the Conservative Government were considering a scheme for a Home Rule Parliament. Gladstone, accepting the theory that we were capable of such an act of treachery, wished to forestall any such

possible move on the part of the Conservatives. The remarkable difference between the estimates given him by his electoral agents of the number of Conservatives likely to be returned and the actual number returned was explained away by the assertion that the difference was mainly due to the transfer of the Parnellite vote to the Conservatives. "The Irish vote can control eighty seats in Great Britain" was a statement constantly made by chagrined Radicals. "Only secure the Nationalist vote in Ireland and Great Britain, and office and power are for ever before you." The estimate of the Irish vote was, of course, grotesquely high.

From the beginning of the year 1886 Gladstone opened out a new chapter in the political history of Great Britain. From that day till now much of our political energy and speech has been expended over this question of Irish Home Rule. It has dwarfed all other considerations, and it has obliterated the recollection of the ghastly failures of Gladstone's Government from 1880 to 1885. Those unhappy years demonstrated the ineptitude and futility of the creed of the so-called Manchester School. Tried and tested under the existing conditions of modern international policy, it utterly collapsed, bringing disaster and discredit upon its advocates and exponents. But we did not then learn wisdom or thoroughly mend our ways. For the last two years we have been fighting for our existence, endangered as it has been through adherence to this creed, and in this struggle for our very lives we are by force of circumstances compelled steadily to denounce

and reverse its cardinal ideas one by one. Let us pray that this repudiation may be quickened and become permanent, and that the only wonder of succeeding generations will be—why were we ever fools enough to adhere to the phantasies of these delusions? .

CHAPTER XXV

At the Admiralty—Reasons for entire change of Board—Huge incomplete scheme of shipbuilding—Cause of delay and disorganisation—Sir Nathaniel Barnaby—His resignation, and appointment of White as successor—White's success—Dockyard reorganisation—Treasury obstruction and final defeat—Treasury attitude on minor questions—Education Estimate—Treasury's strength and weakness—India Office and financial check—Necessity for establishing new system for supervision of expenditure—Sailors and soldiers as heads of their respective Services.

MY experience of the Admiralty was almost unique, as between the years 1885 and 1892 I was, with the exception of a few months, continuously at the head of that Department. During that long period of administration great and far-reaching changes were made in almost every branch of this great Service. What I am now about to narrate refers, not only to the period of my first tenure of office, but also embraces certain incidents in the second period which terminated with the resignation of Lord Salisbury's Government in 1892.

The changes which were made have been accepted almost without exception by succeeding Boards as sound, and have been made the foundation of further and greater reforms. I say this in no boastful or egotistical sense, for I am deeply conscious that, the main merit, for these changes rests with the singularly able body of naval

and civilian colleagues with whom I worked and upon whose experience and whole-hearted assistance I could at all times rely. Smith was very helpful to me at the outset.

As regards the composition of the new Board of Admiralty, Smith was strongly of opinion, after consultation with well-known Naval Officers, that the only safe course for me to pursue was to make a clean sweep of the existing Naval Lords and bring in a fresh group. There were at that time several available administrators of first-class ability outside the Admiralty, and who, in addition to their personal qualifications, possessed the confidence of the Navy. Smith was so just and considerate and had such accurate knowledge of the internal condition of the Admiralty, that I was greatly influenced by his advice, though the duty of getting rid of the existing naval occupants of office was not a task which I faced with equanimity. The three officers in question were Admirals Sir Cooper Key, Lord Alcester, and Sir William Hewitt, and I proposed to replace them by Admirals Sir Arthur Hood, Sir Anthony Hoskins, and Captain Codrington, three tried and capable administrators. I performed my unpleasant duty with all the consideration I could command, but two of the three officers in question were bitterly hurt, and I felt great compunction at being the instrument of their mortification. Alcester, on the other hand, took the opposite view, and when I told him the names of those I proposed to bring in, he said, in his frank, jovial manner: "You are perfectly right. Great changes for the sake of the Navy are necessary,

and you can much more easily effect these changes with men unconnected with the past. Your three men are a really strong lot. I wish you all success, and I will help you in every way I can." I was greatly encouraged by these soothing words.

Our new Board consisted of myself, the three Naval Officers above mentioned, and Mr. Charles Ritchie and Mr. Ashmead-Bartlett as Secretary and Civil Member. The Controllershship remained unchanged.

Admirals Hood and Hoskins, with whom I was subsequently associated for several years, were two men of first-class capacity, keen but sagacious reformers, untiring in their industry, and with great experience, both practical and theoretical, behind them. Hood, from a purely administrative point of view, was, I think, the best man I ever worked with. He was very shy and had a sarcastic manner which made him unpopular with certain branches of the Service ; but he was extraordinarily just and unbiassed in his judgment, selections, and promotions. Ritchie also was a first-class administrator and man of business. His powers of speech were not equal to his powers of action, and he had at times a curt and somewhat ungracious manner. He was, therefore, not generally appraised at his proper value. It was very fortunate that such great changes were made in the composition of the Board, for we found the general condition of the material of the Navy most unsatisfactory, and the Admiralty itself was in a very chaotic condition. Sir Cooper Key, the late First Naval Lord, was an indefatigable worker. His Chief, Lord North-

brook, was constantly out of England on Government business, and he was so much taken up with Indian and Egyptian affairs which were delegated to him by the Government that he had not adequate time to attend fully to Admiralty business. Cooper Key, therefore, was both First Lord and First Sea Lord, and in this double capacity, with his omnivorous love of work, he became the whole Board of Admiralty himself, undertaking the supervision of practically all the departments. This is far too wide and comprehensive a task for any one man to undertake even in time of peace. In war-time or in preparation for war it is an impossibility. The excess expenditure of a million before referred to in the Transport Department was due to two officials giving, without co-operation, simultaneous orders for the taking up of transports, but making no provision for the payment of the officers and crews necessary to man them.

Almost our first business was to draw up a table for the distribution of work and responsibility amongst the various members of the Board, each naval member becoming personally responsible to the First Lord for the administrative work given to him. It is only by such a division of work that the multifarious departments of the Admiralty can be efficiently and concurrently administered.

Turning to the Construction side, we found an almost inexplicable variety of battleships and cruisers uncompleted or building. There were four echelon-turret-ships with four heavy guns in echelon and heavy armour amidships, but with

no secondary armament. They were slow of speed and very bad steerers. There were six battleships of the "Admiral" class, good steamers with a large secondary armament, but practically unarmoured. Though nearly completed, their guns were not forthcoming, and in one case the heavier armament had only been settled after the ship was half-completed. There were two big battleships with low freeboard and with two 110 guns forward but with no big guns aft; and there were two smaller ships of the same design and with guns of lesser calibre. There were two big armoured cruisers with large guns in a quadrilateral in the centre of the ship, and there were five smaller armoured cruisers but whose displacement at full draught was so deep that the armour was under the water. Two big battleships were to be laid down, designs unknown.

Thus there was a huge programme in hand of uncompleted ships, and the number was large, as sufficient funds for their rapid and economical completion had not for years past been voted. All idea of homogeneity had vanished, and effective or simultaneous manœuvring was impossible with such a variety of ships, differing so much as they did in tonnage, speed, armament, and armour. The duty of providing the guns, ammunition, and reserves for the Fleet had been imposed upon the Army, and as the Army could not get sufficient funds for their primary wants it was not likely they would subordinate such wants to the secondary duty of ordnancing the Navy. What the reserves were no one knew, and of the supply of

guns all that was known was that they were deplorably behind the demands of the ships. How our first fighting line had settled into such a condition has always remained a puzzle to me. My predecessor, Lord Northbrook, was an experienced administrator, most upright and conscientious. His First Naval Lord's capacity was undoubted. The only explanation I can offer is that the Admiralty pushed a large programme of building upon the Treasury, and the Treasury retaliated by cutting down the amount necessary for its economical and rapid completion.

Lord Salisbury once said to me: "I recognise the Treasury as a Department of the Government, but not as the Government." In this country the Premier has been, with scarcely one exception, the First Lord of the Treasury, and next to the Premier in rank and status comes the Chancellor of the Exchequer. Almost from the days of Pitt to Gladstone this has been the tradition, and consequently the Treasury becomes, and certainly was under Gladstone, the Government. Northbrook, as we all know, was at variance with Gladstone between 1880 and 1885 on many foreign, Indian, and Egyptian questions, and he probably gained concessions on these matters. He may therefore have been less disposed to fight the Treasury on certain questions, for it is no use attempting to fight the Treasury unless you are prepared to give up office if worsted, and Northbrook, under the exceptional difficulties of this period, may have hesitated to take this extreme step.

Subsequently, we took strenuous steps to

obtain the transfer from War Office to Admiralty votes for the sums necessary for the provision of naval guns, gun mountings, and ammunition. It took us two years' hard fighting to achieve this obvious administrative reform, and the change has made the whole difference as to the expedition with which new ships could be completed and commissioned.

Sir Nathaniel Barnaby was Chief Constructor of the Navy. He was a cultivated, clever man, and a high expert in his profession; but he belonged to and moved in a circle which so hated war that they did not believe in its likelihood—I might even say, in its possibility. He seemed to me to exercise his ability more in showing the great variety of combinations that could be obtained on a given displacement by a variation in the proportion which speed, armour, and armament bear one to another than in ascertaining what was best for the Navy and what the Naval Officers required. At that time there was a strong controversy going on as to whether armour should be inside or outside battleships. The supporters of the former theory contended that internal sloping armoured decks gave as efficient protection as could be obtained from vertical armour on the outside of the ship, and they further argued that this defensive method saved a considerable amount of weight. Barnaby apparently accepted this theory. Almost the last word Northbrook said to me in our various interviews (for he generously placed his knowledge and experience unreservedly at my disposal) was to the effect that Barnaby wished to resign, but he advised me not

to let him go. A few days afterwards I saw Barnaby, and sure enough he tendered his resignation. He did not seem to me to be well, being nervous and excited. I therefore asked him to give me a few days to think over the matter, reserving to myself the option of accepting his resignation. I then consulted Hood in the matter. Hood knew a great deal of the technical side of design and construction of ships. He was also a high gunnery expert. He was altogether opposed to Barnaby's theories, and he strongly advised me to make an effort to bring back to the Admiralty Mr. White, who had recently left the Service to become head of Armstrong's ship-building yard. I made further inquiries and found out that all who knew White had a very high opinion of his capacity. To bring a public servant back into the Service as head of a department over those who had remained was an unusual procedure, and sure to lead to protest. If it had to be done, it must be done quickly and irrevocably. I consulted the Permanent Secretary, who had also a very high estimate of White, and he undertook to go down by night to Newcastle to see White and to ascertain if he was willing to come back on reasonable terms. He saw White, and White was most reasonable, and stated the terms upon which he was willing to return to the Admiralty, provided Lord Armstrong would allow him to go.

I went over to the Treasury and got assent to White's conditions. We had been so near war that the Treasury made no difficulty about raising the terms and the salary of the post of Chief Con-

structor of the Navy. I then wrote to Armstrong, who by return of post most patriotically gave up White, provided that the Admiralty would allow him to take another officer from the Corps of Naval Constructors. Both White and Armstrong behaved with patriotism and promptitude. White gave up a large income, and Armstrong surrendered a man whom he knew to be one of the first naval architects of the time.

. In pushing this arrangement through, I had relied on Hood but had forgotten to consult the Controller in whose department the Chief Constructor was. The Controller was naturally much annoyed, but he was a high-minded gentleman, and he ultimately accepted my explanation that it was from inadvertence rather than intention that he was thus ignored. It was just as well that I did not consult him, for the officials in his department would have made such objections that I should have had much difficulty in getting the matter through. As it was, the two Senior Constructors resigned, but as they were near the age of retirement their loss was soon made good.

W. H. White completely justified the anticipations expressed of his capacity. He was a man of first-class ability, completely master of all the branches of his profession, always ready to hear what Naval Officers had to say of his proposed designs, and to meet, if he could, their requirements. In addition to his great technical knowledge, he had an extraordinary power of exposition: in fact, I do not think I ever came across anyone who could put with greater clearness and force scientific propositions. It was largely

due to his breadth of view and indefatigable industry that the Naval Defence Act was a success. To give some idea of what a man of his capacity loses pecuniarily by transferring his services from private to public employ, he told me that if he had remained in private employ his commissions on the ships he designed under the Naval Defence Act would have been over a quarter of a million sterling. During the many years he was Director of Naval Construction, he immensely improved the British Fleet by the homogeneity and thoroughness of his designs. This was universally recognised by Naval Officers, who will always have a grateful memory of White's exertions and success.

The next question which we had to tackle was the reorganisation and reform of the Dockyards, and this task took three years of serious labour and controversy. The Royal Dockyards had been much criticised of late, and so general was the opinion that as builders they were inferior to private yards that a Committee not long back had recommended that their work should be confined to repairs and fittings, construction being given to private yards. That the Dockyards were dilatory and expensive in their methods was clear, for no ironclad had been completed in five years from the date of its being laid down to the date of its being ready for commission. The estimates for construction had also been greatly exceeded, and, taking the past few years, the general excess of cost over estimate was about 45 per cent. . . .

The tendency in certain political circles was

to assert that these bad results were caused by the Government and Naval Officers undertaking work they did not understand. There were masses of reports on the subject running back for many years. The latest and most thorough of these investigations was very scathing in some of its comments upon Dockyard methods, but, on the other hand, it established certain facts very clearly. The material bought and supplied to the Dockyard was first-rate and advantageously acquired. The Dockyard "maties"—as they were called—were skilled workmen of a high order, and when untrammelled by red tape they had shown exceptional aptitude and quickness in their work. The delay in the completion of ships and the heavy excesses over their estimates were largely due to the Treasury declining to give the annual sums necessary for their rapid and economical advancement. It is a maxim in shipbuilding that to build cheaply you should build expeditiously, that being a combination of time and money which will give the most favourable result. If that period of time is exceeded, the cost of the building will necessarily go up. The Treasury had not allowed their policy of limiting expenditure to be sufficiently influenced by this indisputable proposition.

But inside the Dockyards the system of control over labour employed was very faulty. The accounts of the cost in connection with the labour employed on shipbuilding were kept, not by the shipwright in charge of the ship, but by an officer of the Accountant-General's Department who knew little or nothing about shipbuilding. His

accounts were always in arrear, so the shipwright was compelled to keep unauthorised accounts of his own. When the estimates were exceeded, the Accountant said it was not his fault, as he did not understand shipbuilding. If the shipwright was blamed, he naturally replied that it was the Accountant and not he who was responsible. This system of checking outlay runs right through most of our public departments, and the Treasury attach great importance to it, having an inherent dislike to trusting the control of expenditure to anyone who understands it and is not an accountant or connected with the Treasury. There were a great many other weak points in the Dockyard system, but by a close investigation into the working of private yards and adopting some of their methods we were enabled to remedy most of these defects ; but the pivot upon which most of these reforms depended was a complete change in the control over the labour employed upon the building of ships.

Our proposals were very simple. We undertook first to supply those in charge of building operations with the full amount annually required for the most economical advancement of the ship. Assuming that a big ship takes three years to build, in the first year the bulk of the cost would be material, in the second year labour and material are more equalised, in the third or finishing year the cost is mainly labour of a skilled character. In a big dockyard when working on a large and continuous programme, rapidity and efficiency of shipbuilding cannot be obtained except by the most careful dovetailing of labour

and material, and a comparatively small curtailment of the funds, estimated to secure their combination, throws the whole fabric of constructive arrangement out of gear. A big building programme contained in an Act of Parliament under a time limit has this great advantage: the building authorities are sure in advance of the money they require and at the time they want it: under annual estimates they are always subject to the vagaries of those for the time being in control of the Treasury.

Our second proposition was that the shipwright in charge of the labour connected with building a ship should be responsible for the expenditure he thus incurred. Accountants were to be given him to keep his accounts, which subsequently should be subject to rigid examination by the Audit and Exchequer Department. The Treasury objected to this change, not so much on the ground that it would not be economical, but because it conflicted with their theory that expenditure should be controlled only by accountants under the supervision of themselves. Smith and Goschen, who were then at the Treasury, were disposed to take the view of their subordinates, and a deadlock ensued. Sir Arthur Forwood, who had succeeded Ritchie as Financial Secretary to the Treasury and who possessed in a pre-eminent degree business instincts, had, in combination with the Controller and myself, worked hard for years past to get the Dockyards into efficient working order. We were not disposed to allow our scheme to be upset by Treasury pedantry, and we were determined to resign if we were thus

thwarted. It was ultimately decided by Smith to call in the Auditor and Controller-General and to hear what he had to say upon this difference between the Admiralty and the Treasury. We met, the Treasury represented by Goschen and Welby, the Admiralty by Forwood and myself. The Controller-General, though an able man, was a bit of a crank, and he considered himself so purely a Parliamentary official that he did not think it was right that he should outrun his functions by giving an opinion upon any departmental controversy. After some conversation Smith said: "Then you will not give us any opinion upon this matter?" "In my public capacity," he said, "no; but if you ask me my private opinion, as a private individual, I say that from the administrative point of view the Admiralty are absolutely right, and that the checks and accounts to which the Treasury attach so much importance are absolutely worthless."

We were thus allowed to introduce the scheme, and the effect was electrical. We saved a very large sum in the first year, and in a short time Government establishments were converted from being slow and expensive yards into the cheapest and most expeditious building-yards in the world. This was shown by the building programme of the Naval Defence Act. The first ship of that programme built under the new conditions was the *Royal Sovereign*. She was the largest and heaviest armoured ship that had ever been built in a dockyard. She was commissioned in two years and eight months from the date of her being laid down, and she did not exceed the cost of her

original estimate. Yet in carrying out this great and lasting reform the department of the Government, whose primary duty it was to encourage and expedite savings of unnecessary expenditure, fought tooth and nail against it because it did not fit in with their faulty and ineffective methods.

I had another curious experience of Treasury views. There was a continuous and unnecessary correspondence between the Admiralty and the Treasury in connection with small changes, fresh appointments, and the alterations inevitable in a big department, but for which Treasury sanction had to be obtained. I suggested to the Chancellor of the Exchequer that, in order to save time and unnecessary scribbling, the Treasury official who dealt with Admiralty business should go over once a fortnight and discuss with the naval officials the questions that were likely to be put before the Treasury, that he could do so without prejudice, but that this information would enable him much more effectively to advise the Treasury when the subject on which he had been thus advised came on for their decision. The Chancellor of the Exchequer thought well of the idea, but said he must consult his officials. A few days later he told me that he could not agree to this proposal, as his officials were so averse to it. I asked him—Welby being at that time Permanent Secretary of the Treasury—if the objection was not of this nature: that if a Treasury official once came into personal contact with the Admiralty the technical knowledge of the Admiralty officials would so override him that he would

be unable to hold his own. He admitted that that was the objection.

On the resignation of Randolph Churchill as Chancellor of the Exchequer, he laid down the proposition that the only method by which the Treasury could check expenditure was by reducing aggregates without going into details. Gladstone spoke after him and strongly supported that proposition, and he gave precisely the same reasons as did Welby in declining to discuss these matters with the Admiralty.

I was twenty-two years Minister of the Crown, and my time was divided into seven years at the Admiralty, two years at the Education Department, and thirteen years at the India Office. My experience at the Education Department was much the same, so far as Treasury control was concerned, as it was at the Admiralty. The first year that I was Vice-President of the Council, being anxious to cut down 'unnecessary expenditure, I went very carefully through the education estimates and considerably reduced them, and I only sent on to the Treasury what I believed to be absolutely necessary. I received a reply from the Treasury to the effect that the estimates must be reduced by £10,000. I wrote back pointing out that I had already reduced them by more than that amount, and I asked on what ground this demand was made. In reply I was informed that it always had been the practice of the Treasury to cut down education estimates by £10,000, and to that rule they intended to adhere. The natural consequence was that next year my estimates went into the Treasury as they were

received from the Educational Authorities, and the result was certainly not to the advantage of the Exchequer.

In thus criticising Treasury methods for the control of expenditure, it must not be assumed that I in any way wish to depreciate the exceptional ability or sense of public duty of the Treasury officials. That Department has but a small staff, and it is composed of the very pick of the public services. They have two different sets of functions to perform as a body: first, advising the Chancellor of the Exchequer as regards revenue and possible taxation; and secondly, checking expenditure of other departments. The first duty is performed admirably (and in "Treasury" I include the Inland Revenue and Customs Departments). The care and accuracy with which the forecasts of revenue and of increased taxation are thought out produce extraordinarily accurate results. There is no country in the world whose finance from this point of view is so well managed as that of Great Britain. The second duty that they have to perform is to check expenditure generally. This duty is wholly beyond the powers of a limited staff with little or no knowledge of the circumstances or policies which induce or compel departments to put forward their estimates of expenditure. In my day, the attitude of the Treasury was one of suspicion if not hostility to the heads of the spending departments. Yet it is only the heads of the spending departments who can give to the Treasury the necessary knowledge which enables them to decide whether

or not the expenditure proposed is necessary or unnecessary, or can reduce expenditure without loss of efficiency. The Treasury is the mouth-piece of the Chancellor of the Exchequer ; the Chancellor of the Exchequer is supposed to represent the Cabinet. It would be difficult to conceive any body less well constituted to check expenditure than the Cabinet. It is a hodge-podge body, and the number and selection of its members are regulated not with a view to efficient financial administration, but mainly with regard to the political or party interests which the individual members of the Cabinet represent. No official record is kept of its proceedings, either as to the decisions at which it arrives or the discussion which led to that decision. The Minister of the departments affected by the discussion take away from the Cabinet the decision at which the Cabinet has arrived, and to which, if necessary, he gives effect, and the reasons, if any, for coming to a decision are only recorded in the dispatches or letters of that department. The assent of the Cabinet to fresh expenditure is not unfrequently obtained more by the personality and power of the Cabinet Minister who proposes it than by exigency for the expenditure ; and so it comes to pass that a large extent of expenditure is incurred which is not necessary, and, on the other hand, retrenchments based on an intelligent supervision of existing expenditure are rarely, if ever, made. As an executive and administrative body the Cabinet must necessarily, from its composition and numbers, be a failure, unless the Prime Minister is a man of determina-

tion and strength and he constitutes himself the Cabinet and its mouthpiece.

In recent years it has been found necessary to establish a Defence Committee, and this Committee is composed not only of certain members of the Cabinet but of the leading Navy and Army officials. It also calls to its counsels Colonial and Indian experts if the question under discussion relates either to the Colonies or India. This Committee has proved itself to be so useful that the scope of its work is constantly increasing, and it has for military purposes dispossessed the Cabinet. I believe it to be a fact that the only financial mobilisation which at the commencement of the war was suggested and adopted emanated from this body. But there is no body under our existing political system which is entrusted with the survey and revision of expenditure, or which has authority to give priority to those objects requiring expenditure which most press for recognition, and there is no record kept of the decisions to which, from time to time, the Cabinet may come upon questions of expenditure which are raised by individual members of the Cabinet.

The Indian Council, which is a modern creation, may be said to be the Cabinet for India. Its functions are much the same as those of the Imperial Cabinet, with this important exception, that their procedure and their powers are defined by an Act of Parliament. They have absolute control over the expenditure of India. The most important body inside that office is the Finance Committee. Every proposal for increased ex-

penditure coming home from India comes before that Committee, and the argument also of the department who urge that expenditure. There is thus a continuous record of the reasons for the expenditure so proposed and of the reasons against it ; and the unquestionable result, in my judgment, is that the business of checking expenditure is far more efficaciously performed by the India Office than it is by the Treasury, and a better result is obtained from the expenditure sanctioned. After this war we shall not have merely to preach theoretical economy, but we shall have to practise it rigidly both in Imperial, local, and personal expenditure, and our first duty, so far as Imperial expenditure is concerned, is to set up machinery which can inculcate and establish effective economy. This can only be done by calling in those who have a personal knowledge of the expenditure which is in question or which has to be curtailed. The continuance of the policy of arbitrarily cutting down aggregates by a few clerks or accountants who know nothing either of the objects of that expenditure or the policy which it represents, must come to an end.

During the past few years the Treasury is becoming a spending department itself, and it has set up two great establishments which it administers, *i.e.* the Old Age Pensions and the National Insurance. The appalling increase of the expenditure of both these departments is proof that the system of check over expenditure by the Treasury is hopelessly futile, and if they cannot be successful as regards departments

which are under their immediate control and purview, how can they be successful in those branches of administration which are altogether alien to them? We have far too many accounting checks. There are accountants in every department; there are accountants in the Treasury; there are accountants in the Audit and Exchequer Department. The universally accepted principle in all public companies and big private undertakings is to place reliance on the official who has knowledge of the objects of the expenditure, and to make him responsible for keeping control over it, and to subject the expenditure so controlled to a searching and rigid outside audit. This working, common-sense principle should be enforced in the public departments. It is quite true that, from an axiomatic point of view, policy controls expenditure, or, reversing it, expenditure controls policy—the two are inextricably mixed up. But the proposals I put forward would, if effect were given to them, greatly improve the position of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. He would not then be struggling in a hopeless attempt to check expenditure of which neither he nor his department has the necessary touch or knowledge, and he would, under the system I suggest, be able to rely upon the heads of the great spending departments, whose knowledge would be at his disposal, adopting not an antagonistic attitude to the Treasury, but cordially working with it for a common, recognised object.

A permanent Finance Committee, composed of members of the Cabinet with a special staff

and kept records, working in accord with the heads of departments, would be a real relief both to the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Treasury. Although the Treasury would nominally cease to be the sole authority for the supervision of expenditure, they would exercise a dominant control over a really effective instrument for ensuring priority, supervision, and retrenchment over our national expenditure. It cannot be too plainly asserted that at present there is no department, and there is no machinery, to supervise and adjust expenditure or to take such a general view of national wants and national resources as to give priority to the expenditure most urgently needed, or to retrench outlay where it has ceased to be necessary.

The Treasury, therefore, being at present the mouthpiece of Government control over expenditure, the question at once suggests itself—what are the influences at work behind the Treasury for the furtherance of this control? Those influences are unquestionably more political than administrative, and their purport is the saving of money regardless of efficiency. Moreover, there is a fundamental difference of policy between the two great political parties: the one attaches far more importance than the other to the maintenance of our naval and military establishments on an efficient basis. That difference at once suggests another question—what is an efficient basis? I recollect a very distinguished Admiral being cross-examined before the Committee of the House of Commons who was asked this question: “Is our Navy, in your

judgment, adequate to protect the interests of the British Empire?" His reply was very simple and to the point: "If you will tell me against whom the Navy has to protect those interests, I can give you an answer, but not otherwise."

For years past it has been the practice of one political party to pooh-pooh all indications of hostility as shown by Germany, and to denounce violently any public personage who dared point out that we were in a parlous and critical condition from the known antagonism to us of that country. If there was any man to whose opinion weight should have been attached, it was Lord Roberts. He had served his country for more than half a century; he was a man of the very highest and most chivalrous character; he had no personal object whatever to serve, as he had attained the maximum of recognition and honour: yet, when so distinguished a man, with such an unimpeachable record behind him, warned his country of a danger which is now admitted by all to be real, he was treated with contumely and scorn. A prominent Member of the present Government denounced his speech as "hellish" or "devilish"—I forget which epithet it was—and suggested that he should be made to apologise to Germany. Another Member of the same party, even more zealous, suggested that he should be deprived of his pension. Now the man who indulged in this attack on Lord Roberts cannot pretend to be an ignoramus. He occupied no less a post than that of Under-Secretary to the Foreign Office. If there was anybody except his Chief who might have been

supposed to know a little of European politics and something of the internal condition of Germany, it would have been this young man. He is now making what amends he can by sitting in the House of Commons attired in khaki. I mention this to show the uncontrollable bias that there is amongst a large portion of the Radical Party against precautions or the expenditure necessary to make those precautions effective.

A number of remedies have been suggested. As regards the Navy, one suggestion was that an alteration should be made as regards the Orders in Council. In 1869 a change was made by which the collective responsibility of the Admiralty for work done by the Admiralty was abolished, and the Naval Lords were placed in the position of being individually responsible to the First Lord of the Admiralty for the different departments and works assigned to them. Now it is assumed by certain naval and other writers that if we reverted to the practice which existed previous to 1869, the First Lord of the Admiralty, who is a civilian, would be dominated by the Naval Lords who under that Order in Council exercised collective responsibility with him. I believe it to be an entire delusion to assume that previous to 1869 the First Lord of the Admiralty was not just as dominant and just as powerful inside the department as he was subsequently. Collective responsibility for the administration of an executive department such as the Admiralty is impracticable. No one can, as one of a collective body, be responsible for things over which he has no personal control. Collective responsibility,

therefore, necessitates that every one of the collective body should have the power of controlling and interfering in all the business for which he is assumed to be responsible. A Naval Officer of standing and character would not accept the post of First or Second Naval Lord under such conditions, if it would give junior officers on the Board the power of interfering with him in the administration of departments of which he is now head and for which he is now personally responsible. Whoever is First Lord of the Admiralty, be he a civilian or be he a naval man, must be supreme in his department. If the Board of Admiralty are to act in a collective capacity, I assume that where there is a difference of opinion it will then be decided by a majority of votes; but the authority and position of the individual members of Boards so differentiate that it would be impossible to give to each member equality of voting power. There is the First Naval Lord, who is by far the most important person on that Board. There is the Second Naval Lord, who is responsible for the personnel; the Third Naval Lord, who is responsible for the material; the Fourth Naval Lord, who is the maid-of-all-work; and a Civil Lord, who looks after the civil establishments. If they were given votes, the value of their respective voting would be calculated somewhat as follows :

First Naval Lord	..	45	per cent.
Second Naval Lord	..	20	„
Third Naval Lord	..	20	„
Fourth Naval Lord	..	10	„
Civil Lord	..	5	„

On a scale of voting such as that, the First Naval Lord and the First Lord would be able to rule the rest of the Board, and they ought to ; and that is now the practice.

There is a great deal, however, to be said for adopting in this country the principle, which prevails largely abroad, of placing a sailor and a soldier at the head of the Navy and the Army. At the Admiralty, though the majority of the Board changes whenever there is a fresh patent taken out, the Controller or Third Naval Lord is exempt from this rule and stays on for a period of five years, it being assumed that it is necessary there should be such a continuity in the administration of his department as to make it imperative for him to hold office for a fixed period. It might therefore be advisable to adopt the same principle as regards the Navy and the Army, and to appoint eminent Naval and Military Officers as the respective heads of those two Services for a fixed period. But to do this would require the recognition of a principle which is supposed to be wholly alien to that of popular representation. At present, it is the constitutional practice, if it is not the law of the constitution, that the head of the Navy and Army should be a Member of one of the two Houses of Parliament. To continue that practice is to limit your selection as regards future heads of the Navy and Army from the very small number of naval and military men who have taken up politics and become Members of the House of Commons or happen to be in the House of Lords. Such a limitation of selection would make things worse than they are now.

There are, no doubt, certain exceptions, but, as a rule, the naval or military man who takes to politics makes his political career his first object, and the best men in the Navy and the Army do not come into the House of Commons. It is therefore essential, if ever the idea of having a naval or military man at the head of affairs be adopted, that the whole Navy and Army should be open for the selection of these all-important appointments. If this were done, then I think it not improbable that men of exceptional ability, both in the Navy and Army, knowing that there was a possibility at the close of their career of occupying these most responsible posts, would qualify themselves by a wider study of the questions connected with their profession than at present they feel necessary.

But, as I have said before, expenditure regulates policy, or policy regulates expenditure—I care not which way it is put—and it might seem fundamentally contrary to our constitution that we should bring into the Government individuals who would be responsible and could press heavy expenditure upon their colleagues without themselves being responsible to any constituency for the expenditure they so advocated. This difficulty should easily be got over by bringing in an Act of Parliament to regulate the establishments both of the Navy and the Army, say, for a period of five years. There would be great obstruction, in the first instance, to the passing of these Acts; but I believe that if the principle was once adopted it would be subsequently assented to readily. It has this very great advantage—that so soon as a

definite policy is laid down as to what these establishments should be, then it becomes the duty of the Financial Authority to provide the money necessary for the maintenance of those establishments. The attention of those in charge of these establishments would be concentrated on obtaining the maximum efficiency from the sums they could rely upon receiving for a period of five years.

Under the present system, for a period of two months or more in every year there is an animated and very often an acrimonious discussion between the Treasury and the Admiralty and the War Office as to what the estimates should be, and in this controversy each department is almost forced, from the shape the controversy assumes, to try and do the other's business. The Admiralty and War Office become financiers, and the Treasury attempts to master the mysteries of shipbuilding, or the enigmas of recruiting, and the proportion which guns should bear to the unit.

If any scheme of this kind ever assumes shape, one of the first facts to which it will call attention is the very high salaries which are paid to politicians who are placed in charge of the Navy and Army as compared with the pay of the highest-placed Naval and Military Officers. The emoluments of the War Minister and the First Lord of the Admiralty are about double those of the highest-placed sailor or soldier.

The general argument in favour of a civilian being placed at the head of the fighting departments as against the selection of sailors or soldiers is that the training of the latter is circumscribed,

and that when you take them outside the discharge of duties clearly defined and bound round with tradition and regulations they have not the knowledge or necessary adaptability required for political forecasts or management of Parliament. There is some practical force in this contention ; but the recent establishment of a General Staff both at the Admiralty and the War Office will do much to mitigate this objection. The General Staff of both these departments must grow in numbers and authority, and its purview of questions must embrace many subjects outside the purely naval and military sphere of drill, equipment, and tactics. The ablest men in both Services will then obtain a widening and comprehensive training ; international politics cannot be ignored ; scientific and industrial invention and production must be carefully watched ; the idiosyncrasies of those high in office, both at home and abroad, will have to be noted—in fact, everything likely to promote a war or to affect war will be made a part of their official curriculum. This work ought to produce (and I am sure will produce) sailors and soldiers capable of discharging with prescience and efficiency the duty of administering both our Navy and our Army.

REFLECTIONS

CHAPTER XXVI

Reflections—"Conscientious Objector"—How created—Origin, growth, and development of Manchester School—Its mischievous influence on national questions—Inability to deal with modern international situation—Contrast between our methods and those in Germany—Our Pacificists largely responsible for this War—Indication of some necessary changes for the future.

THE "Conscientious Objector" just now looms somewhat largely before the public gaze. He is an unhealthy tare, not entirely indigenous to this country, but cultivated and multiplied here in a political atmosphere specially conducive to his development. His conscience has an intense loathing of the horrors of war. Being so obsessed, he declines to move a little finger to protect the women and children of this country from the horrors of the most abominable methods of warfare ever recorded in history. In certain cases his objection is not merely confined to a disinclination to fight, but also to doing any work, even the succour and relief of the sick and wounded, provided that the sufferings of those so affected are due to the service and defence of their country. The Strasburg goose has an exuberant liver. This exuberance has been cultivated for generations by a special system of

feeding and daily routine for the expansion of this organ ; but the expansion is obtained at the sacrifice of the life of the animal itself. The “conscientious objector” in Great Britain has become exuberant under a similar course of political training and education, and what we now have to do is to take such precautions against this unhealthy development as will prevent it from destroying the healthy existence of the nation.

In any other country in the world such objectors would not be exempt from performing the elementary duties of common citizenship, but they would be subject to punishment or deprivation of civil rights for the attitude they had assumed. How comes it to pass that in this country this attitude of unpatriotic recalcitrance is not only tolerated by special provisions in Acts of Parliament, but it is even applauded in certain political coteries ? Because in this country, through the attitude of a certain political school, the worship of self has been cultivated with such persistent assiduity that the discharge of the plainest duties to the State are subordinated to the convenience and wishes of the individual. “Civil and religious liberty” was a noble cry when the principle itself was endangered, but it has become inflated to such an extent as to have become a stumbling-block to the safety of the realm, a serious obstacle to the organisation of the State resources and power, and absolutely destructive of patriotism and self-sacrifice. Refusal to defend your country is the shape which this conscienceless obstinacy now assumes ; but

it has its root and genesis in movements and propaganda started long ago, which were organised and given expression to by men of ability and high standing.

The Manchester School of politics was largely founded and propagated by Bright and Cobden. They were both men of exceptional capacity, and unquestionably they had high ideals before them, however much we may differ as to their practicability. They were both born early in the nineteenth century, and the childhood and early surroundings of each were associated with the general distress and high prices of food which prevailed for many years after the termination of the Napoleonic wars. Both were manufacturers and belonged to the class of society from which in those days manufacturers emanated. Both in the course of their experience found that the high prices of food contracted their capacity to give employment. In those days of universal protection Cobden made the discovery—let us give him all credit for it—that in those years in which the price of food was low employment increased, and as those prices rose, employment fell. The object of protection being to increase native industry, Cobden pointed out that by artificially raising the price of food, protection was artificially reducing the amount of employment. Therefore, he argued, reduce as low as you can the price of food, and all employment outside agriculture must improve, and agriculture itself (for various reasons I need not now enumerate) will not be damaged. In his agitation he came in contact with the agricultural interests.

As the agitation proceeded, the antagonism between agricultural interests and those represented by Bright and Cobden became more and more bitter, and the animosity of both these agitators being aroused by this antagonism they proceeded to embark in a continuous and venomous campaign against the landed interest and all connected with it. In the course of this controversy they and their followers became so incensed and blind to facts that they started the monstrous and untenable theory that the Napoleonic wars were entirely caused by British aggressiveness, and that the bulk of the House of Commons, being mainly composed of landlords, encouraged this aggressiveness, as it raised their rents and improved their position. Landlordism and militarism were thus coupled together and became in course of time an anathema to the Manchester School, as it was implied, if not asserted, by many of their speakers that the joint object of both these influences was to encourage war in order to benefit themselves and to increase establishments to provide appointments for their relatives. In my own time I can recollect a prominent and cultured member of this school deliberately asserting in the House of Commons, amidst the applause of his associates, that the Army was composed of the froth and dregs of society; and the same individual in another national crisis deliberately implied that the Tory Party's object was to embark upon war and so increase naval and military establishments as to enable their relatives to obtain commissions who otherwise would be unable to pass the necessary

examination. If a well-known Parliamentary with a good University education behind him felt justified in using such language, it is easy to imagine the class of "Billingsgate" in which the less cultured and more unscrupulous of his associates would indulge.

The movement, purely fiscal in its first conception, left the track of dry economics and embarked in a political vendetta against the Land and the Army and all who supported these two national institutions.

The prejudices of religious sectarians were next attracted to and enlisted in this campaign, for the landed party are the main supporters of the National Church, the clerics of that establishment being friendly to the Army, as they are acquainted with the advantages accruing from military training and discipline. The Church of England was then put under the ban of this agitation. Nonconformity had little, if any, touch with the Army. With the exception of the Wesleyans, the numbers from other branches of Nonconformity who enlist in the Army were almost infinitesimal. Socially and financially, the great mass of Nonconformists are below the status of the officer and above that of the private. But the legitimate dislike of war is very intense in Nonconformist circles, and, ignorant of the true feelings of the Army from want of personal contact with it, they accepted and believed the assertion that a standing army was a provocative form of militarism, maintained not for defence but aggression. Thus, one of their maxims assumed the form that the more the Army was

cut down the better was the chance of maintaining peace. Nonconformity is especially strong in the lower strata of middle-class society, and these strata were, before the Reform Bill in 1868, in proportion to their numbers very strongly represented in the then electorate.

The natural antagonism between the Church and Nonconformity was accentuated by the prolonged controversy as to the policy to be pursued in connection with National Education. The primary object of political Nonconformity being the overthrow of the National Church, they foresaw the tactical disadvantage of allowing the Church to retain control over a large proportion of elementary education. It therefore became to them a political movement of the first importance to oust the Church from the possession and management of the schools which they had built. Thus, three great national interests—Land, Army, Church—became the subject of obloquy and misrepresentation from an unceasing and ever-present agitation. Yet, in most other countries, Land, Religion, and the Army are the bulwarks of national defence and national existence, and though it may be possible by political manœuvring to depose these influences from the vantage-ground that they should naturally occupy, it is utterly impossible to find any substitute efficiently to replace them or the services they can in combination render in time of stress and emergency.

. This is the great and fundamental blunder of the Manchester School. Ignorantly and hastily they tried to sweep away a system which did not fit in with their partisan predilections, without

understanding or duly weighing the consequences of their iconoclastic policy. It is only fair to them to say that they started a theory in which they implicitly believed that, if international trade could be continuously encouraged, the benefit would be so self-evident to the nations participating in it that self-interest would prove a more effective barrier to war itself than even a strong army and navy. To this doctrine was added the corollary that as democratic ideas were spreading more and more over the civilised world, so would the inherent dislike of war increase, democracy being in itself a lover and cultivator of peace. This pleasant delusion for nearly three generations has been a sacrament of the Manchester School, and it has been more than half accepted during that period by Radical Governments so far as the principles of their foreign policy were concerned.

For the last fifty years heavy and unremitting pressure has been exercised both in the House and outside upon all fresh expenditure on military establishments. In fact, there is not a single movement made during the last half-century to increase the efficiency of our military services that has not met with violent opposition from a large portion, if not from the majority, of the Radical Party in Parliament. Towards the Navy a less truculent attitude was adopted, for it was impossible to deny that without a Navy England was not safe from invasion; but even in this sphere of protective work every proposal for improving the Navy has, with scarcely an exception, met with strong criticism and persistent opposi-

tion. Only a few days before the outbreak of war in 1914, I presided over a meeting of the Political Economy Club to hear a paper read by the very able Editor of the *Economist* upon Naval Expenditure. He is an out-and-out supporter of the purest and most undiluted doctrines of Cobdenism. His paper was one continuous scoff at the absurdity of our naval expenditure, which, in his judgment, was three or four times in excess of the work it could possibly be called upon to perform. If the transmigration of souls were possible in this material world, one would like this gentleman's mind to be now put inside the body of the Commander-in-Chief of our Grand Fleet for, say, a week. On its return to its original owner it would make him a few degrees nearer sanity when in the future he discants upon National Wealth and National Insurance.

When such vilification of the Army has gone on for so many years, when it has been the object during this period of one of the great political factions of the State to assert that a large portion of their opponents has a criminal tendency to involve their country in war, and that war in itself is a most awful curse, can it be wondered at that a certain proportion of those into whose ears these denunciations have been so continuously dinned accepts them as true and, with minds so poisoned, objects to participate in the defensive war in which we are now fighting for our existence? Have they not precedents? Smallpox is one of the most frightful of human diseases; but the conscientious objector, to vaccination struts with assurance amongst the population whom

he may contaminate, and even obtains in certain quarters applause for his disregard of the law and of the safety of those amongst whom he moves.

The Nonconformist crank, who scents sacerdotalism in the teaching of the elements of Christian faith in public elementary schools, becomes a conscientious objector to the payment of rates. At once he becomes a martyr, but not for long, as his martyrdom ends upon his rates and fines being paid by others for him.

This refusal to comply with elementary obligations of the law is largely due to the glorification of self and disregard of the relative positions which self and the State should occupy one towards the other. It strikes at the foundations of patriotism and self-denial. It makes collective action impossible.

The tactics and teaching of the Manchester School have unquestionably been the genesis of this mischievous rot, for it endeavoured to establish the doctrine of *laissez-faire* at home, and that the cultivation of cosmopolitan amity by profitable trading was preferable to that of patriotic self-denial. I recollect a most distinguished divine, the first scholar and preacher of his time, whose preferment in the Church was for years stopped because, though Liberal, he preached a sermon in which he pointed out that the wholesale denunciation of Jingoism was wrong, for Jingoism was but a rough and crude form of patriotism, and that patriotism ought not to be put under a ban. Unfortunately, Gladstone was one of the congregation, and for years to come inferior men were promoted over the preacher's head, and when at

last an ecclesiastical offer was made to him it was associated with a negligible income.

I have been a Free-trader all my life, because it is clear that in times of general peace, from a trade and profit point of view, the freer the exchange of production the greater the benefit from the exchange. But it is equally true that a nation can in times of peace prosper rapidly and continuously under a system of protection. It is the industry of the individual and not the fiscal system under which he works that is the primary cause of national prosperity. Whether a nation adopts a free-trade or protective system is a matter of expediency and not of principle, and is not governed by purely economic considerations. For the future, a nation must consider its trade policy both from the war and peace standpoint. War smashes up all idea of free exchange : free trade disappears upon the announcement of war. Bright and Cobden were too shrewd not to know this. Therefore, they argued, you must keep off war. But you cannot keep out of war, as we have recently learned, unless you are prepared to sacrifice honour and recognised obligations with the certainty that if you begin by these moral surrenders you will soon have to give up material advantages both of trade and of territory. In these days of piracy, to have the greatest trade in the world and the biggest Oversea Empire necessitates force for their protection ; otherwise, both will be taken from you. Our economic and financial position, after eighteen months' war, is astoundingly strong, but this is due, not so much to the fact that we have been

for many years past a free-trade nation, but because during this war we have the strongest and most efficient Navy in the world. If the philosophic Radical Party had had their way our fleet would not have been adequate to its present task, and if it had failed we should now be starving, wageless, and prostrate. But even with our naval supremacy we are obliged now, as far as we can, to curtail our imports. Germany, on the other hand, has found salvation in her system of protection. Without it she could not have maintained her position or supplied the necessary munitions of war.

Conditions of war, as well as those of peace, must, therefore, be taken into consideration in framing our future fiscal policy. Cheapness must not be allowed to dominate all considerations of safety and self-support, and the wishes, wants, and capabilities of the great Oversea Dominions will force themselves into a more dominant position for consideration here. *Laissez-faire*, the most insidious of political narcotics, must not only cease to be the moving principle of our system, but must be eradicated from it root and branch.

Whilst we have allowed ourselves to be beguiled by these delusive theories, the policy of North Germany has continuously and resolutely propagated the antithesis of such principles. Starting with the idea that the State is everything, it has utilised every branch and detail of Imperial and local administration to inculcate into the German from his birth to his death his obligation and subordination to the State. Education, military training, literature,

the Press, clergy, Parliaments—all vie one with another in this work. A careful watch is kept by the Government lest any influence of any kind should attempt to intervene with any contrary doctrines, and woe betide the recalcitrant who attempts it. Germany has been drilled into one solid mass of patriotism, ready to bear and to brave for its Fatherland anything it is asked to do.

In our schools patriotism is untaught, commemorations of great victories are unknown, the Union Jack is unflown, the celebration of Empire Day until recently was forbidden, and little or nothing is taught to the rising generation of the wonderful heritage in store for them—won by the courage and fighting power of the British race. An extreme protégé of the Manchester School, when he became a Minister and Commissioner of Works, absolutely declined to fly the Union Jack over the Houses of Parliament. To encourage patriotism might promote militarism: therefore patriotism, although it is the foundation and mainspring of nationality, must be rebuffed and, if possible, put underground. Everything connected with our military establishments has for many years past been the butt and the subject of ridicule of philosophic Radical writers and speakers whose general ideas of naval and military establishments and their relation to this country are summed up in Bright's remark that England is like "Issachar, a strong ass bowed between two burdens."

When Bismarck, with his policy of blood and iron, unified and consolidated North Germany, he

determined that no ideas such as were taught by the Cobdenite political economy should get into the higher education of Germany, and he gave strict injunctions that whatever economics were taught should be associated with the primary duties of developing the industrial and productive resources of Germany, that a wall of protection should be put around them, from behind which Germany should emerge for the invasion of other lands. He utterly repudiated the idea of cultivating cosmopolitan amity as a substitute for a love of your own country.

The two systems have come in collision, producing an explosion of the most terrible kind—a universal Armageddon. For nearly two years past our daily reading has been a narrative of the most appalling destruction of property, the most frightful carnage of humanity, and of the most devilish scientific devices for the destruction of both. We may rightly attribute to their schooling the brutality and cruelty with which the Germans are demonstrating their patriotism; but may we not also say that but for the views so freely expressed by philosophic Radicalism in Great Britain this war would never have taken place? If Germany had known how little the pacifists represented the general feeling of Great Britain, she would not have deliberately challenged her, and if the pacifists had, so far back as two years ago, accepted instead of ridiculing Lord Roberts' advice, we should—even in the eventuality of war—have had an army large enough to have established a striking supremacy at the outset.

When Cobden ventured into the sphere of international politics and the causes of past wars, from his preconceived prejudice he went hopelessly astray. Impregnated with the notion that the idea of war was a monarchical and aristocratic foible, supported only by permanent military establishments, he at last talked and wrote himself into believing this fable. His adherents up to two years ago were in the same dreamland. Now that war has broken out, many of them spend their time in discussing the undoubted waste and muddle of our hastily-improvised methods. But to whom is the fault attributable that our preparatory arrangements were so backward and our supervising organisation so extravagant? The fact is, that whenever the Manchester School step outside their original and limited fiscal object into general politics they become befogged. They do not understand human nature, and they base all their ethics upon arithmetic and balance of profit and loss. Psychology, human emotion, and passion are to them a sealed book. Yet they attempt to predicate to mankind the aspirations of the future.

The word "perfidious" is constantly attached to the policy and government of Great Britain by foreign writers and historians, and these or similar epithets so frequently appear in their writings that there must be some reason for this constant reiteration of the same idea. Is it not to be found in the fact that in every national crisis a deprecatory note has been heard of the folly and inutility of relying on force—a note so insistent as to mislead the Governments and nations abroad

as to the real determination of the country ? In the crisis of July 1914 it was the "Cocoa Press" (as it is familiarly known) which misled Germany. There are many persons of authority and knowledge who believe that if in the earlier stages of the Serbian difficulty Great Britain had plainly declared her intention of standing by France if she was attacked, and had been able to speak with the authority of unanimity, the German General Staff, desirous as it was for war, would never have dared provoke this combination against themselves. The Kaiser has over and over again publicly declared that he did not desire this war. As he himself declared war against Russia and then against France, and further ordered his army to invade Belgium, he cannot pretend that he did not want *any* war. What he must mean is that he did not want a war with England ; or, in other words, if England had made her intention clear early in the controversy, there would have been no war.

Reflection on past blunders is sorry thinking, except to prevent their recurrence. We have passed through an awful experience during the last twenty months. Are we to benefit by that experience ? Are we in the future to tolerate in our midst as a political element of influence doctrines which have so nearly brought upon us dissolution and ruin ? Are they to be allowed for the future to cramp and arrest the acts and policy necessary for the preservation and continuance of our national life and of our Empire ? What are these measures ? Let me shortly state some of them.

First, we must reform the existing procedure of the House of Commons and curtail the duration of the session. At present men of character and ability and accustomed to a busy life decline to waste ten months of the calendar year in an atmosphere of self-advertising talk and lobby intrigue.

We must also revise our system of primary education and training so as to inculcate as early as possible into the young a love of country and a sense of duty for its service, and associate with this sentiment of patriotism a less pretentious and more practical time-table.

Next, we must take into consideration the reform of higher education. This involves the deposition of the Classics from its present omnipotent position in the universities and public and secondary schools. Modern languages, history, and literature must have their full recognition in the time-table and instruction of the future. More and more attention must be given in our educational curriculum to subjects germane to and necessary for the development of scientific manufacture, agriculture, and general production. An industrial nation must train its young for their future occupations. Work rather than amusement must become the standard and ideal of national effort, and this doctrine must be enforced early in life. Whilst athletics and useful outdoor exercise must continue to be encouraged amongst the rising generation, ball games must cease to be the be-all and end-all of life as they are at the present moment to a large proportion of the population.

Universal military training for one year be-

tween the ages of eighteen and twenty-three, based on the Territorial system, with yearly subsequent training of limited and diminishing periods.

The fixing of naval and military establishments by quinquennial Acts of Parliament, thus excluding the variations and reductions in numbers caused by annual factious pressure or agitation. In this Act might be added the power of selecting as First Lord of the Admiralty or Minister of War an officer from the ranks of the Navy or the Army, and of giving to officers so selected the right, if necessary, of attending and speaking in either House of Parliament when required.

Labour leaders must put their heads together to frame methods for the improvement and protection of the wage-earning class other than those of imposing checks and limitation upon individual effort and personal skill.

A careful revision of the principles upon which the Commercial Treaty with France was negotiated by Great Britain in 1860, with a view to their adaptation and expansion for future use, and the abolition of the Best Favoured Nation Clause.

The imposition of a Customs tariff—first, for purposes of revenue; secondly, to secure the self-contained manufacture of staple national trades; and thirdly, to safeguard the production of articles essential to our commercial independence and national safety.

Special and closer commercial relations with our Dominions over the Sea, to be framed by variations in and departures from this Customs tariff.

No mineral concessions or sale of mineral property to be granted to foreigners in any part of the British Dominions, except with the consent of the Government of the territory in which the mining property is situated.

Constitutional machinery to be established between Great Britain and the Oversea Dominions ensuring, so far as local conditions will permit, collective action by legislation or otherwise upon questions of common interest and danger.

These measures would, in combination, produce out of the splendid latent qualities of our race conditions which would greatly add to the intelligence, industry, physique, and patriotism of the people, and associate with these qualities a self-elevating and intelligent system of education, a permanent and attractive military service, sensible and self-adjusting relations with foreign nations, and closer military and commercial affinity with our kinsmen and fellow-subjects over the sea. The British Empire would then become a reality in power, policy, and unity, bringing disciplined and organised influence, both moral and material, from all quarters of the globe in support of the principles of peace, progress, and liberty.

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